

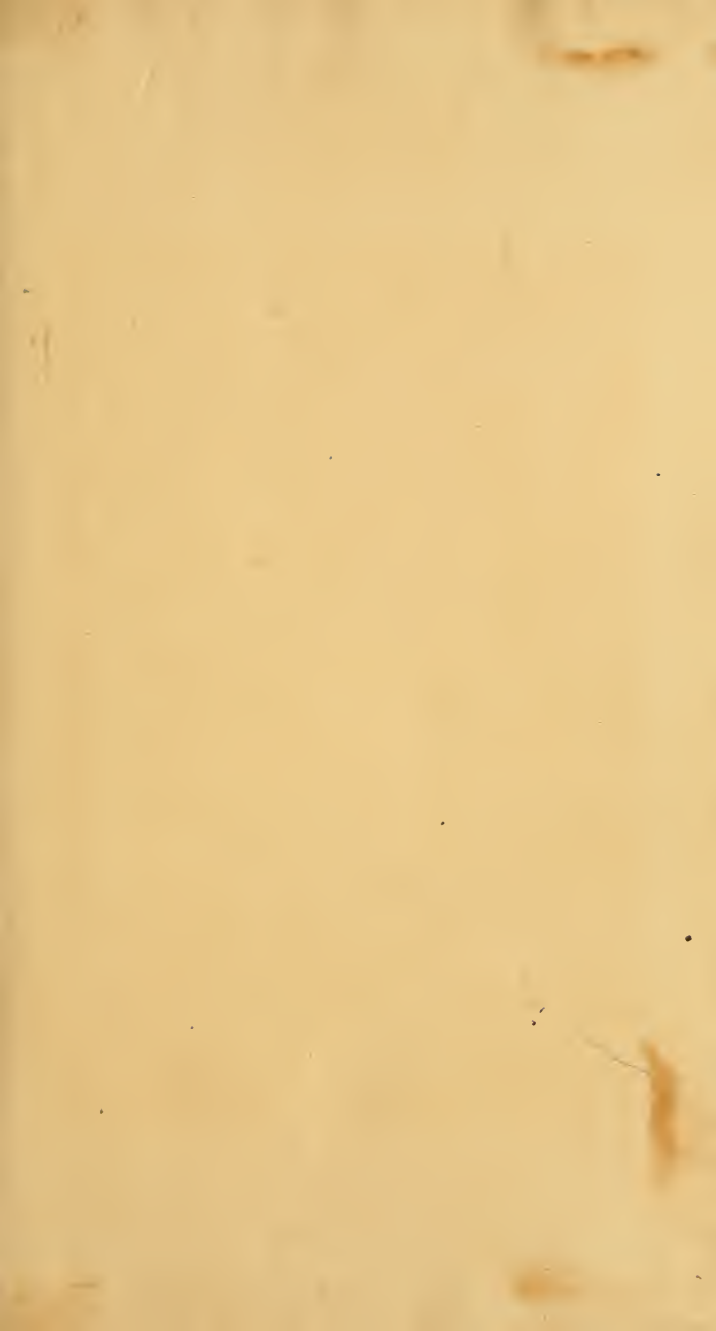
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AN INQUIRY
INTO THE
PRINCIPAL QUESTIONS AT ISSUE
BETWEEN THE,
BAPTISTS AND PEDOBAPTISTS,
ON THE
SUBJECTS AND THE MODE OF BAPTISM.

EDINBURGH :

PRINTED BY OLIVER & BOYD.

B. Purvis
AN INQUIRY

INTO THE

PRINCIPAL QUESTIONS AT ISSUE

BETWEEN THE

BAPTISTS AND PEDOBAPTISTS,

ON THE

SUBJECTS AND THE MODE

OF

BAPTISM.

BY JOHN MUNRO, KNOCKANDO.

“ Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.”—John vii. 24.

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THE Author's distance from the Press deprived him of an opportunity of correcting the following errata, which have escaped the Printer's notice.

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|------|-----|------|----|-------|----------------------------|------|----------------------------|
| PAGE | 11 | line | 34 | for | <i>our,</i> | read | <i>ever.</i> |
| | 12 | | 24 | | 380, | | 318. |
| | 22 | | 23 | | <i>he,</i> | | <i>here.</i> |
| | 59 | | 9 | | <i>repel,</i> | | <i>expel.</i> |
| | 64 | | 8 | | <i>on him,</i> | | <i>an heir.</i> |
| | 65 | | 17 | | <i>his,</i> | | <i>the.</i> |
| | 70 | | 3 | | <i>then,</i> | | <i>when.</i> |
| | do. | | 18 | dele | <i>our,</i> | | |
| | 71 | | 6 | for | <i>change,</i> | read | <i>cleanse.</i> |
| | do. | | 14 | | <i>that,</i> | | <i>what.</i> |
| | do. | | 41 | | <i>changing,</i> | | <i>cleansing.</i> |
| | 72 | | 30 | | <i>against,</i> | | <i>again to.</i> |
| | 73 | | 39 | | <i>in,</i> | | <i>on.</i> |
| | 83 | | 39 | | <i>surely,</i> | | <i>verily.</i> |
| | 85 | | 2 | | <i>possession,</i> | | <i>profession.</i> |
| | 93 | | 14 | | <i>possess the belief,</i> | | <i>profess to believe.</i> |
| | 97 | | 7 | | <i>iv—ix.</i> | | <i>iv. ix.</i> |
| | 101 | | 4 | | <i>vested,</i> | | <i>rested.</i> |
| | 107 | | 4 | | <i>would,</i> | | <i>could.</i> |
| | 113 | | 1 | | <i>churches,</i> | | <i>church.</i> |
| | 117 | | 10 | | <i>practical,</i> | | <i>practicable.</i> |
| | 123 | | 30 | after | <i>“preposition,”</i> | | insert EN. |
| | 132 | | 5 | for | <i>horror,</i> | read | <i>horns.</i> |



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PREFACE.

WHAT! Another book on the Baptist controversy! Yes, gentle reader, another yet: but let not this offend you. I trust you will be able to muster as much patience as will enable you to read the author's apology; which is a conviction that his friends and neighbours need very much to have their attention directed to the subject.

For many years he has lived and laboured in the vicinity of what he esteems the best baptist church north of Aberdeen. This has afforded him ample opportunity of marking the beauties and the blemishes of the system. His baptist neighbours must bear him witness, that, for nearly twenty years, he has made it his study to follow peace with them. They know that when occasionally called to preach or baptize in the circle of their operations, he has uniformly refrained from interfering with *them* or *theirs*. Of this they have made their own use; they well know with what unwearied industry they have endeavoured to proselyte their pedobaptist neighbours; and that, among other painful arguments, they have frequently urged the author's studied silence on the subject as a convincing proof of his conviction that his avowed sentiments and practice cannot be vindicated; and his conduct has been generously attributed to a want of reverence for the authority of

Christ ; or, to use the appropriate language of a recent writer, “ that he had discernment enough to appreciate the force of evidence, but not piety enough to pursue the path of duty.”

For the sake of peace he bore all this, and much more of the same kind ; and although frequently importuned by respected brethren to write on the subject, he never could until very lately bring his mind to take any part in the controversy. One of his most insurmountable objections was,—the exposure which must of necessity be made of what his neighbours hold so dear and precious. Now that he has ventured to take the field, he will take the liberty of stating some of his principal reasons ;—these are,—

First, A conviction that, in this part of the country, the majority of pedobaptists are very imperfectly instructed in regard to the real questions at issue between them and their baptist brethren. This is not to be attributed to any deficiency of information in the Bible, but to what I must call a criminal negligence either in pastors or people, perhaps in both. Connect with this,—

Secondly, The industry with which the opposers of infant baptism propagate, what I must call the most erroneous doctrine respecting God’s ancient church, including its constituent members and institutes. For some time, little of this seemed necessary in this part of the country ; but in proportion as the minds of individuals became more enlightened on the subject of baptism, our friends found it necessary to import and circulate a mass of errors, which have been prepared by

the able advocates of the system in other places. The reader will find a specimen, and but a specimen, of the errors referred to, in the following pages, which have been, and continue to be, clandestinely propagated among the simple here, with perhaps more than apostolic zeal. To this is to be ascribed the disproportionate space which the part of the subject referred to occupies in the following essay. In intimate connexion with the above must be noticed,—

Thirdly, The pernicious effects of the seeds thus sown. I do not here allude to any influence the above doctrine may have had in making converts to the party; for I know that, in various instances, it has had an opposite effect; but I refer to the effect it has on the minds of the two following classes:—*1st*, Young and inexperienced believers in connexion with pedobaptist churches. No person, who is sufficiently acquainted with the manners of the Scots baptists from their youth, need be told, that, in propagating their principles, they uniformly mark such feeble subjects for their prey. Nor need it be thought strange, that their treatment of such persons as, perhaps, never had their minds before turned to the subject of baptism, should mar their peace and their comfort, and cool their affections toward their former connexions, who are industriously represented as living in the neglect of a plain precept of Christ's word. Whatever side of the question they may ultimately espouse, the injury done to them, and to the churches of Christ, is incalculable. *2d*, Persons recently awakened to a concern for their souls. Did our friends confine their very ill-timed zeal to persons awakened by their own instrumentality, the writer

would pity their folly, but he would not complain; but it is too well known, that whenever they hear of persons within their reach brought under soul concern by any means, they make every exertion to get them speedily entangled in their toils. The writer has no doubt but that in doing so they sincerely think they are doing God service; but his view and theirs differ so widely on this point, that he cannot help thinking, that the zealous baptists are among the most unskilful hands into which a newly-awakened person is likely to fall.

Such, good reader, are some of the causes to which the following remarks are to be ascribed. Whatever you may think of them, they have for some time past made such an impression on my mind as could not be shaken off,—an impression which has ultimately overcome my extreme reluctance to the task which has thus been undertaken. Having thus stated my principal reasons for taking up the pen, before laying it down I must take the liberty of requesting my readers in general, and especially my baptist friends, to beware of thinking or saying that the following pages are written AGAINST THEM. They are written with the exclusive design of vindicating God's eternal truth, and the precious privileges which he hath mercifully granted to *their infants* as well as to *ours*. With the opposite errors I have used great freedom. Wishing to exhibit them in their true colours, I have not only compared, but also contrasted some of them with the plainest texts in the Bible. I do not expect that the authors from which I have quoted will thank me for this labour of love. As I have no wish to give them or their friends any unnecessary pain, I have purposely avoided the in-

sertion of any of their names ; but I trust they will forgive me this wrong. They will be able to recognise their own words ; and, for their own sake, I could wish them to be unknown by the rest of my readers.

The reader who is acquainted with the baptist controversy will find that some inferior branches of the argument on both sides of the question have been omitted. It may be proper to assure him, that this is not to be ascribed to any formidable difficulty anticipated in any of them, but to a wish to fix the attention of all parties on fundamental principles ; to prove that infant baptism is in perfect harmony with all that is testified in the Scriptures, from beginning to end ; and that these Scriptures cannot be made to tally with the opposite system. It has been my wish to make these facts manifest to the most simple and illiterate of Christ's disciples. How far I have succeeded must be left with the unbiassed judgment of the candid reader to determine. In the mean time I must take the liberty of saying, that, to the best of my judgment, I have neither wrested nor misapplied a single text in support of any argument. The authors from which I have quoted will see that their words are not misplaced. I am aware that some of the sentiments upon which I have animadverted will be found at variance with the better sentiments and judgment of their pious authors. This is their fault, not mine. I have ascribed no meaning to their words but what they plainly express, and what, to the best of my knowledge, they were intended by their authors to express.

I am aware, that it is the order of the day, that disputants should compliment each other with good words and fair speeches. It is probable that some of my readers

will blame me for having violated this known law. To all such my apology is brief:—I am not yet convinced of its orthodoxy; but I have not forgotten that, by the recorded example of the archangel, we are forbidden to bring a railing accusation against the devil. While it appeared to me a duty to use sharpness in exposing what I conceive to be great and grievous errors, I have studied, at the same time, to avoid every thing like railing against their authors and votaries. If, notwithstanding of this, any thing of the kind has escaped, the reader is requested to blot it out, and pray that the writer may obtain forgiveness.

Although fully persuaded that the principles which I have endeavoured to vindicate are immutable truths, I have no doubt but the critic will be able to detect blemishes. Let all these be exclusively placed to the writer's account. I hear some of my baptist friends have already been threatening to write me down; and I embrace this opportunity of kindly and earnestly inviting them to the field. Provided they shall meet and attempt to overturn my main arguments, I shall be most happy to meet them on that ground; for it is my most earnest wish that the principles at issue may be thoroughly investigated by all parties. Until this is done, the subject cannot be consistently set to rest. In the mean time, it is cheering to know, that the period is approaching in which all who love the Lord in sincerity shall be "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." May the Lord hasten it in his season.



PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

THE subject of the following remarks is one of those concerning which good men differ. Some practise while others condemn infant baptism. Both parties cannot be right. Those who are wrong will look in vain to the Bible for any thing to sanction their error. If it be wrong to baptize the infant seed of believers, we are sure that there is not one text nor institute in the Bible that gives the least countenance to the practice. And as it is certain, that, by the appointment of God, the infant seed of his people were anciently recognised as a constituent part of his visible kingdom, if they must be excluded under Messiah's reign, their exclusion must be as explicitly commanded as their original admission was. On the other hand, if infant baptism be of God, there cannot exist in the Bible one text, institute, or example, to forbid the practice. Further, as God is immutable, that side of the question which accords with his revealed will must be in perfect harmony with his conduct toward the seed of his servants, under every dispensation of his mercy; and any system which manifestly outrages God's uniform treatment of the seed of the righteous, from the beginning, proves that it cannot be of God. How far this is the case, with the system opposed in the following pages, will be manifest in the sequel.

In entering on an investigation of the subject, it is of importance that the leading questions at issue be distinctly understood and stated. What renders this necessary is, the well-known fact, that the opposers of infant baptism invariably confound these with others,

about which we have no controversy with them. For example, we have no dispute with them concerning the legitimacy or the obligation of adult baptism. We know that it is the duty of qualified believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, to be baptized; but we deny the lawfulness of rebaptizing those who have been baptized in infancy, into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And we do so, because we are certain that, for such baptism, there is neither precept nor precedent in the Bible. We maintain too, that all those texts which refer to the baptism of adults, when they first professed the faith of Christ, ought to be excluded, as they cannot be legitimately made to bear upon the subject; because the question does not respect the baptism of such qualified subjects, but whether or not the Bible warrants the baptism of their infant offspring with them. To infer from those texts which record the baptism of believers, that their children must not be baptized, is just as erroneous as it would be to infer, from examples of adult circumcision, that infants must be excluded. Nor does the question merely or chiefly respect the external rite of baptism, detached from its import and merciful design; but the question is, whether or not the great promise of God's everlasting covenant be disannulled? And whether or not the merciful Saviour, when he appeared, paganized all the infant seed of his people?

That God has abrogated that part of his covenant which included the children of his servants, and that he has cast them all over the hedge of his vineyard, is the doctrine of the opposers of infant baptism. This is the thing that renders the controversy so deeply interesting to Christian parents. Did the Bible authorise the painful change, we should feel bound to submit, but it certainly would be with a bleeding heart. In the mean time, we feel thankful to the Father of mercies for the evidence we have, that the contrary is the fact. "He sent redemption unto his people; he hath commanded his covenant for ever." "As for man, his days are as grass." "But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him,

and his righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them." Psalm cxi. 9, and ciii. 17, 18.

Having made the above preliminary remarks, we proceed to consider the foundation on which infant baptism rests. Whatever diversity of opinion may exist among consistent pedobaptists who understand the subject, it is presumed the following will be found a pretty correct statement of the ground on which they proceed in observing the ordinance of infant baptism, viz:—

The interest which God has explicitly granted to the infant seed of his people in his everlasting covenant of mercy; the place he has assigned them in his visible kingdom on earth; and the evidence contained in the Scriptures, that the gracious grant has never been revoked.

The above definition is, we trust, sufficiently accurate. If its doctrine can be fairly confirmed by the word of God, no valid argument can be found in the Bible against infant baptism. The reader is entreated to lay aside prejudice, to take the Scriptures, and weigh, in that even balance, the following illustration, which, for the sake of order, we shall arrange under three general propositions.

I. GOD HAS EXPLICITLY GRANTED TO THE INFANT SEED OF HIS PEOPLE AN INTEREST IN HIS EVERLASTING COVENANT.—The gracious grant is thus announced to the father of the faithful:—

“And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.” Gen. xvii. 7.

Whatever blessings are comprehended in this covenant, it is as plainly intimated as human language can intimate any thing, that, by God's free gift, they belong alike to Abraham, and to his seed after him in

their generations. Believing Gentiles are now the seed of Abraham, and, as such, blessed with him, and fellow-heirs of the same promises. Jehovah did not make a new covenant with Abraham on the occasion referred to. In verse fourth he addressed him thus: "Behold my covenant is with thee;" and, in the verse quoted above, he promised to establish his covenant, which was already with him, with his seed after him, in all succeeding generations." God gave his covenant, substantially, to Abraham, and to his seed after him, when he called him out of his native country. See Gen. xii. 1, 2, 3. On a subsequent occasion, the Lord made a covenant with him, which was solemnly ratified by sacrifice. See Gen. xv. In reference to these, and including all previous gracious grants, Jehovah said, in the text prefixed, "I will establish my covenant," &c. On this occasion, the Author of the covenant instituted the sign of circumcision, for purposes which will be noticed in course. In the mean time, it will be necessary to prove that the covenant, of which circumcision is the token, is the everlasting covenant of grace,—substantially the same with that under which we are placed, although the mode of its administration be different. The reader need not be told, that the opposers of infant baptism hold an opposite view of this covenant. Many arguments might be properly adduced in proof of the fact; but our proof shall be drawn from two articles, which our friends allow to belong to the covenant in question. These are, first, ITS GREAT PROMISE; and, secondly, ITS SIGNIFICANT SEAL.

In the first place,—THE PROMISE OF THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT PROVES IT TO BE THE EVERLASTING COVENANT OF MERCY.

When God promised to establish his covenant with Abraham, to be a God to him and to his seed after him, in their generations, the end for which he did so was, that he might be a God to him and them. This promise includes all the promises previously given to the human family; and eternity alone can unfold its infinite fulness. It comprehends all that grace, and all those rich blessings, which its Author has prepared for

them that love him, in time and eternity. Let us shortly glance at some of the rich blessings included in it, as unfolded to us in the oracles of God. It implies,—

1st, *The gift of a Saviour.* Jehovah never proposed to be a God to any of Adam's guilty posterity but through the mediation of Christ. The greatest and the best gift he had to bestow is his own Son. This unspeakable gift is included in the promise. Hence the inspired song of Zacharias: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up for us an horn of salvation. To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his HOLY COVENANT, the oath which he swore to our father Abraham," &c. See Luke i. 67—73. The HOLY COVENANT is that which is recorded in Gen. xvii. In process of time God was pleased to confirm his holy covenant with his oath. To that oath Zacharias referred. The apostle assures us, that the covenant was thus confirmed, and its immutability announced, to give strong consolation to the people of God under the gospel-dispensation. See Heb. vi. 13—19.

Since the promise includes the Saviour, and since its immutability stands confirmed by the oath of Jehovah, to give strong consolation to those who obey the gospel, is there any room to doubt or dispute the fact, that the Abrahamic covenant is the everlasting covenant of grace? And is it possible that any subsequent dispensation could disannul the covenant, which is thus immutably confirmed? But,

2d, *The promise implies the glorious future resurrection.* The ancient Sadducees, like the opposers of infant baptism, could see nothing but temporal blessings in God's promise to be a God to Abraham and to his seed after him. Hence, consistently with their view of the promise, they maintained that there is no resurrection. But the Saviour selected it as the grand proof of the future resurrection. "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?"

God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Matt. xxii. 31, 32.

3d, *The promise comprehends all the rich blessings of the glorious future inheritance.* Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, expected the heavenly country as the accomplishment of the promise; and we have ample evidence that the promise warranted such hope. The apostle intimates, that God would have been ashamed to be called their God, had he not prepared for them the heavenly inheritance. "But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city." Heb. xi. 16. The apostle John gives us an animating description of the city intended; and he assures us, that the eternal enjoyment of it will be in accomplishment of the promise in the establishment of the Abrahamic covenant. The description to which we refer is in Rev. xxi. In it we have the following declaration: "He that overcometh shall inherit all (these) things, and I will be his God."—"God himself shall be with them, and be their God." Surely, then, the covenant which comprehends the above blessings must be absolutely everlasting, and substantially the same with that under which we live.

It may now be proper to notice how the above plain facts are disposed of by the opposers of infant baptism. They do see, at least the more intelligent of them, that they are in direct opposition to their system; and they find great difficulty in getting over them. For this purpose, many inventions have been sought out, which intended brevity forbids us to notice at present. In general, they affirm that the promise comprehended spiritual blessings to Abraham, and only temporal blessings to his seed. In order to make this pass for truth, they ascribe to the great promise a *literal* and a *spiritual* meaning. Its *literal* meaning, or rather the blessings literally promised, they kindly grant to Abraham's fleshly seed. Its *spiritual* meaning, or the blessings not *literally* promised, they divide among Abraham's spiritual seed. We are told that its literal blessings were thus exhausted: "A God to

Abraham and his seed in their generations,"—"fulfilled in their preservation in Egypt, receiving the law at Sinai, and in all his dealings with that extraordinary people." Its spiritual meaning is thus expounded: "This prefigured the peculiar care and affection which the spiritual seed should experience, and the new and better covenant which should be given them." Thus the covenant and the promise are reduced to a mere figure, or shadow of the new and better covenant; and, by the same author's own shewing, in the new and better covenant, neither Abraham, nor those who were heirs with him of the same promises, could have any inheritance, because it was not made till long after they had slept in death. I could fill a volume with similar views of the Abrahamic covenant. The attentive reader, who has examined the Bible on this subject, must infer, from the above specimen, that its author must have been at a great loss before he could publish such *literal nonsense*, when commenting on one of the plainest promises in all the Bible. But he had an end to answer; and that end was, to persuade believers that the great promise was exhausted among the fleshly seed of Abraham; and that, since they have no earthly inheritance to seal to their children, they have no interest in the promise, and no right to get their children baptized. Let those who are able receive the doctrine. For our part, we are perfectly satisfied with what is literally contained in the promise, "A God to thee and to thy seed after thee." We wish for nothing more, for ourselves or our children, than what the promise *literally* contains. We are sure it can never wax old or vanish away; and that nothing but unbelief can deprive us or them of the good promised.

Before dismissing this branch of the argument, a few remarks seem necessary to rescue the promise from the above and similar glosses. It should be remembered, that the Abrahamic covenant comprehends duties as well as privileges, precepts and threatenings as well as promises. Some of these are explicitly stated, Gen. xvii. While the promise *literally* and *plainly* includes

all the blessings of the great salvation, it by no means implies that either Abraham or any of his future posterity should inherit the good promised, whether they obeyed God or not. On the contrary, God assured him and them, that, in the event of breaking his covenant, they should forfeit its blessings. See ver. 14. The promise was given to support the faith of Abraham under all his subsequent trials, to animate his hope in training up his family for God, and to excite his offspring, in all future ages, to embrace the God of Abraham for their God, and to cleave to him with purpose of heart. This is manifest by Jehovah's conduct toward the posterity of Abraham, in their generations. By all his servants whom he raised up among them he faithfully warned them, that, in case they did not cordially embrace him by faith to be their God, as proposed to them in the promise, he would cast them off for evermore. In opposition to God's plan, the bulk of them embraced and held fast the baptists' view of the covenant and its promises; and this proved their ruin. "They kept not God's covenant, and refused to walk in his law." But those who did so became apostates from the faith of Abraham; they were Jews outwardly but not inwardly. See Rom. ii. 28, 29. To this, and not to the imaginary, literal, and spiritual meaning of the promise, as will be made manifest in course, to this is to be traced the origin and progress of the marked distinction between the fleshly and the spiritual seed of Abraham. The covenant and the promise were the same to both; and as graciously proposed by God, they belonged alike to both. They were an essential part of those revealed things which, as Moses told them, belonged alike to them and their children. But while some of the posterity of Abraham, like Isaac and Jacob, embraced the good promised, others, like Ishmael and Esau, rejected the counsel of God against themselves.

The above view of the covenant and its promise will be found to harmonize with all the precepts and promises—the warnings, invitations, and threatenings in the revelation of mercy; and likewise with God's

conduct toward the posterity of Abraham in every age. It is not only consistent with the Scripture doctrine of the perseverance of believers, but presents us with some of the principal means whereby believers are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation; means which the baptists' glosses tend to destroy. We would now request the reader, who wishes to study this part of the subject more fully, to take a Concordance, and examine the passages in which the promise is referred to in the Old and New Testaments; and if he has a mind to receive instruction, we can venture to assure him that the labour will be amply rewarded.

In the second place,—THE SEAL WHICH GOD ANNEXED TO THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT PROVES IT TO BE THE COVENANT OF GRACE. When God announced the gracious grant to Abraham, and his seed after him, he said, "Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee, in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; every man-child among you shall be circumcised," &c. Gen. xvii. 9, 10.

Of the seal of this covenant the apostle gives us the following exposition:—"He received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised," &c. Rom. iv. 11, 12. Circumcision is here defined a seal of the righteousness of the faith which Abraham had being uncircumcised. It is likewise denominated a sign. We shall have occasion to inquire what circumcision signified in course. Our present inquiry shall be, what was circumcision intended to seal to all the parties concerned? The apostle's language is sufficiently plain: "A seal of the righteousness of the faith," &c. A seal is an instrument used to make an impression upon wax annexed to some writing, containing the pleasure, determination, or engagement of him whose seal it is. The intention of annexing a seal to such a writing is solemnly to make known that the writing is his writing, or the act his act, and that it contains and communicates his pleasure, &c. If this be a just description of a seal,

its application to circumcision is obvious and natural. Circumcision was appointed to be a seal of the righteousness of the faith which Abraham had. The faith which Abraham had was God's holy promise, or rather covenants of promise. The promise implied that righteousness which is unto all, and upon all, who believe. Of this righteousness, circumcision was the divinely-instituted seal. It was God's seal, annexed to his own word or covenant, solemnly to make known, that it was his will and pleasure to be a God to Abraham and his seed after him, in their generations. Like his oath, which was afterwards annexed, it was intended to show the immutability of the holy covenant; and it answered exactly the same end when applied to the seed of Abraham, whether they believed or not. Those of them who believed "set to their seal that God is true;" but neither the faith nor the unbelief of the posterity of Abraham could make any alteration in the covenant or the promise. This view of the subject, while it agrees with the doctrine of infant circumcision and infant baptism, will be found in perfect harmony with every reference to the important subject in the Old Testament and the New; and no other can be made consistent with what is testified in the Scriptures. On this, therefore, we might rest our proof that the sign of the covenant, being a seal of the righteousness of faith, proves the covenant to be immutable and eternal; but as the opposers of infant baptism have been compelled to publish a very different view of circumcision, it will be proper to examine their doctrines more particularly.

By the appointment of God circumcision was applied to three distinct classes. To evade the force of our argument, our opponents have been obliged to assign to it three diverse uses, every one of which is aside from the truth. It was appointed,—

1st, To Abraham. "He received the sign of circumcision." Our friends allow that to Abraham it signified spiritual blessings. "Circumcision" (they affirm) was the seal or token of God's acceptance of Abraham."—"A proof that God accepted him, and

declared him through faith justified in his sight." In order to make this fancy pass for truth, it is only necessary to substitute *Abraham* for the *righteousness* of the faith which Abraham had, or the *covenant* of which circumcision was the *token*. This interpolation will make it quite manifest, that it could not have the same meaning when applied to his infant seed; and yet we are told that, when applied to them, it still retained its original signification. That it did so is proved by the following appropriate similitude:—"Alexander, by his conduct and bravery, saves his country. His king confers on him a title and an estate. These descend to his children; but they are still the token of their father's valour." Thus it appears, that, in order to make circumcision suit the baptist system, it must be viewed, not as the token of God's covenant, but of Abraham's valour. Perhaps another similitude will tend to throw some light on the subject. Noah, by the faith which Abraham had, was the honoured instrument of saving, not his country, but the seed of man and beast. On that memorable occasion, his king constituted him the father of all succeeding generations. At the same time he instituted a token, to be to him and them a seal, not of his or their valour or cowardice, but to be a faithful witness of his own covenant of promise, that he would not again destroy the earth by a flood of waters. See Gen. ix. 8—17. If the reader will carefully compare the above institute with Gen. xvii. 1—14, he will find such similarity between the two as will tend much to make the true design of circumcision sufficiently manifest. To affirm, that the bow in the heavens was appointed to be a seal of God's acceptance of Noah, is just as consistent with truth as it is to say, that our circumcision was a seal or token of God's acceptance of Abraham. The truth is, that both were seals or tokens of the immutability of the covenants of promise to which they were annexed; and such they remain, whether the parties concerned believe or disbelieve. But,

2d, Circumcision was appointed for Abraham's infant offspring. "He that is eight days old shall be cir-

cumcised among you ; every man-child in your generations," &c. Gen. xvii. 12. Of the divers uses which the opposers of infant baptism assign to circumcision, as appointed by God for the posterity of Abraham, we present the reader with the following specimen:—"A sign of a numerous posterity,"—"A sign of carnal descent,"—"A mark of national distinction,"—"A token of interest in those temporal blessings which were promised to Abraham,"—"A partition-wall between Jews and Gentiles," &c. By the above comment, we are taught to believe that, to the posterity of Abraham, circumcision was appointed to be exclusively the sign, token, and seal of carnal things. But is this really the case? We entreat the reader to search and see. If he will take his Bible, and examine every passage in it which refers to circumcision (and no institute is so frequently mentioned), he will not find one text to confirm any one of the uses assigned to it in the above catalogue. On the contrary, he will find, that wherever circumcision is mentioned, as instituted by God, it invariably refers to spiritual objects. We shall have occasion to show what these spiritual objects were, in the proper place. In the mean time it may be necessary to show, that it neither did nor could be a sign or token of the articles enumerated. It will be allowed, that the God of truth could not institute circumcision to be the sign or token of a glaring falsehood ; but such he knew it must have been, from first to last, had he assigned to it the uses which the opposers of infant baptism have invented. For instance, it never could have been a sign of carnal descent—a mark of national distinction, or a partition-wall between Jews and Gentiles. We know that, before its institution, Abraham had, at least, 380 trained servants born in his house. He had no child of his own, but the son of the bond woman ; yet we know, that, by the appointment of God, every male member of Abraham's family was circumcised in the same day. See Gen. xvii. 23. In all succeeding ages converts from among the Gentiles were admitted into the church of God by circumcision. All this was done by the appointment of the Author of

circumcision : can any thing be more false than that it was a sign of “ carnal descent ?”

3d, Circumcision was appointed for the male servants in the family of Abraham, and those of his future posterity. “ He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised,” &c. Gen. xvii. 13. The opposers of infant baptism must allow, that circumcision could not be to the servants a token of carnal descent, nor a sign of any of the articles specified. The following is a specimen of the use they assign to circumcision, when applied to the servants :—“ The servants were their masters’ property, and this mark might be put upon them as well as any other.” The reader is again entreated to compare the above with what is testified in the Bible concerning circumcision. When God instituted it, he pronounced it the token of his covenant between him and the circumcised. The apostle tells us, that it was the seal of the righteousness of the faith ; but, in opposition to this, the baptist system compels its advocates to exhibit it as the divinely-instituted sign and seal of bondage and slavery.

We read with horror and honest indignation of the fiend-like cruelty of the West-Indian planters, who brand their slaves to mark them as their property ; but, if we admit the baptists’ doctrine concerning the seal of God’s covenant, by his express command the father of the faithful set these “ iron-hearted masters” the example of thus mangling the flesh of their unhappy slaves ! But how very opposite to this is the use of circumcision, as instituted by the Father of mercies, and expounded by his servants ! “ The token of God’s covenant between him and his people”—“ a seal of the righteousness of the faith”—by which all the seed of Israel shall be justified,—and a seal to confirm the immutability of God’s counsel. Such was its design, and such it actually was to all the parties for whom it was instituted. Of course, that covenant of which it was the token could have been none other than that which was thus confirmed of God in Christ,

which no subsequent dispensation could possibly disannul. See Gal. iii. 15—18.

Having thus seen that the Abrahamic covenant is God's eternal and immutable covenant of mercy,—that it includes Christ, and all the blessings of a full, a free, and an everlasting salvation,—it now remains to notice the interest which God has graciously granted to the seed of his people in its administration. The gracious grant is thus announced:—

“ I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.”

We have seen that this great promise includes all the blessings of the great salvation. The grant of the land of Canaan, specified in the next verse, is one of those temporal blessings which the Lord was pleased to give to his people.* The language in which the

* Since the above was written, I have perused, with much pleasure, Dr WARDLAW'S MASTERLY DISSERTATION ON INFANT BAPTISM. My remarks were begun before I heard of the doctor's design of publishing on the subject, and almost finished before I had an opportunity of seeing his work. I was happy to find such accordance between the sentiments of such an eminent expositor of the Scriptures and the remarks which I had previously written on the same subject. The attentive reader will see, that, in some subordinate points, there is a shade of difference. For example,—the doctor considers the promise of the earthly Canaan as the ground of Abraham's hope of the heavenly inheritance. I have no doubt, but that the earthly Canaan was a type of the heavenly; but my present conviction is, that the hope of Abraham, &c. was begotten and nourished by God's promise to be a God to Abraham and his seed after him. See Heb. xi. 13—16.

Again, the doctor considers the promises as having been made to the spiritual seed,—my present conviction is, that, as originally given by God, they belonged to the seed of Abraham as such, to be the SEED of their *spiritual birth*; although, in the nature of things, none but those who embraced the promises could have inherited the good promised. Moreover, on the mode of baptism, the doctor makes a concession in favour of the baptists which seems to me gratuitous. He grants that plunging under water is “ valid Christian baptism.” No man alive can be more opposed to zealous contention about mere circumstantialia than his humble servant; but if the sentiments which I have learned from the *Bible alone*, concerning the divinely-instituted mode of baptism, be just,

good promised is announced is as plain as human language can be ; and it is equally manifest that, by Jehovah's free grant, the seed of Abraham, in their generations, had the same right with their fathers to all the blessings promised.

Let the reader examine the text. The covenant was between Jehovah and Abraham, and between Jehovah and Abraham's seed, in their generations. It was established for an everlasting covenant ; and the end proposed is the same with respect to Abraham and his seed, viz., to be a God to Abraham and his seed after him, in their generations. The opposers of infant baptism have found great difficulty in getting "over it ;" and their divers interpretations, if admitted, will render it as ambiguous as any heathen oracle that ever was uttered. In general, they maintain that the spiritual blessings belong exclusively to Abraham and his spiritual seed, and that the temporal blessings belonged to the fleshly seed of Abraham, as such. In order to show that the above is an erroneous and a very pernicious doctrine,—a doctrine opposed to some of the plainest texts, and to some of the plainest facts, recorded in the Bible, we remark,—

1st, That it is expressly contradicted by apostolic testimony : " My kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites ; to whom pertain the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises," &c. Rom. ix. 4, 5. It is self-evident that the characters here mentioned were carnal ; but they were the seed of Abraham, and, as such, the apostle testifies, that to them pertained the covenants and the PROMISES. This text is not a solitary

the reader must see, that the baptist plan, of plunging a covered body under water, cannot be valid Christian baptism "in name or thing."

I confess, it may appear somewhat impudent in me to differ thus from my worthy friend ; but, after carefully examining both views, I could not alter what I had previously written ; and, I am sure, Dr WARDLAW is not the man who could wish me to have done so without full conviction. I have only to add, that the difference referred to does not in the least affect the chain of argument, whereby infant baptism is proved to be the appointed ordinance of Christ.

one on the subject ; but, had it stood alone, it is sufficient to overthrow the reasoning of the opposers of infant baptism, on this part of the subject. It clearly intimates that, in virtue of God's gracious grant to Abraham and his seed after him, the promises, and all the distinguished privileges enumerated above, belonged to the fleshly seed of Abraham, as such. To this it has been objected, that if the spiritual promises belonged to the fleshly seed of Abraham, as such, how did it happen that so many of them came short of the good promised? "What becomes of the faithfulness of God, since we know that the bulk of them perished in their sins?" This objection, although somewhat specious, is a specimen of very pitiful sophistry ; but, as we know it has puzzled some weak believers, it will be proper to expose it.

When the apostle testifies, that the promises "belonged" to his unbelieving kinsfolk, he did not mean to intimate that they either *did*, or *could*, *inherit the good promised*, in A STATE OF UNBELIEF ; but he meant to say, that God's free grant to Abraham and his seed made the promises and all the privileges specified, a part of those revealed things which belonged to them and their children, whether they received or rejected them. The apostle, in effect, states and answers the objection. Rom. iii. 1—4. Leaving the reader to examine the passage, we remark,—

2d, *That the baptists' exposition of the Abrahamic covenant would have rendered it impossible for any of Abraham's fleshly seed to have become spiritual.* I am aware that this is a very serious charge. The reader is entreated to examine the following proof, and then judge for himself. The opposers of infant baptism maintain, that the promise, in its literal meaning, belonged to the fleshly seed of Abraham, as such ; but they confine its literal meaning to temporal privileges. What these are we shall see in course. In the mean time we observe, that when the covenant was ratified by circumcision, in the family of Abraham, he had no spiritual seed of his own flesh. His only child at that time was the son of the bond maid, and we know that he

became a persecutor, and was cast out. It will be admitted, that it is by faith that Jews or Gentiles become the spiritual seed of Abraham. (Compare Rom. iv. 1—16, with Gal. iii. 7—9.) Nor can it be denied, that divine faith is grounded upon and limited by the promises of God. Now if, as the baptists teach, the promises of the Abrahamic covenant presented nothing to the fleshly seed of Abraham, as such, but temporal things, would it not have been presumptuous sin in them to have believed in God for any one spiritual blessing? Abraham believed according to the promise; but, believing according to the baptists' view of the promise, the faith of his fleshly seed, in their generations, must have prevented the possibility of their becoming spiritual. Their faith in the promises must have bound the world in their heart; it must have chained their hope, and every affection of their soul, to the world, and the things of the world. Nay more, it must have bound them, by dire necessity, to have lived and died Sadducees; and, living and dying, their faith must have been as acceptable in the sight of God as was that of their father Abraham, since, like Abraham, they believed according to what he had spoken. For the justice of the above reasoning I appeal to the opposers of infant baptism; and surely the subject deserves their serious consideration.

It now remains to examine how the baptists' exposition of the covenant will accord with the history of the seed of Abraham, in regard to temporalities. It is affirmed by them, "that as the infant seed of Abraham were members of the covenant, circumcision was a sign and seal of their interest in all its temporal blessings; and that to the end of their lives, whatever might be their conduct or characters, nothing excluded them from the general privileges of the Abrahamic family."

The doctrine taught in the above quotation is sufficiently plain, and it justifies the charge brought against the author's view of the promise. But how can it be made to harmonize with the following undisputed facts? The bulk of that generation which the Lord brought out of Egypt, and to whom he gave the promises in

the most explicit terms, perished in the wilderness. Their children entered in, and for some generations the seed of Abraham enjoyed the good land; but in process of time, by a combination of unparalleled judgments, the posterity of Abraham were cast out. I presume no baptist will affirm, that they suffered thus in consequence of not believing what they call the literal meaning of the promise. If they believed that "God stood in a particular external relation to them," and "had given them such a right to the general privileges of the Abrahamic family as no impropriety of character or conduct could dissolve," they believed according to the promise. But if so, what became of the faithfulness of the promises? The carcasses of those to whom the promise (the apostle says the Gospel) was first preached fell in the wilderness; and for nearly eighteen hundred years the seed of Abraham have been vagabonds among the nations. If the reader will consult the third and fourth chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and compare with them what God threatened by Moses and almost all the prophets, he will find a satisfying answer to the above question;—but, on the baptist principles, he will find it unanswerable.

We have thus endeavoured to prove, that as the Abrahamic covenant comprehends all spiritual blessings by the gracious grant of its Author, the seed of Abraham, as such, had a common interest in it; although, in every age, the bulk of them rejected the counsel of God against themselves.—We shall now proceed to illustrate the next proposition in the definition, viz.:

II. IN VIRTUE OF THE INTEREST WHICH GOD HAS GRANTED TO THE INFANT SEED OF HIS PEOPLE IN HIS EVERLASTING COVENANT, HE HAS APPOINTED THEM A PLACE IN HIS VISIBLE KINGDOM ON EARTH, AND COMMANDED THEM TO BE ADMITTED BY THE INITIATING ORDINANCE.—See Gen. xvii. 9—14.

The opposers of infant baptism admit the doctrine of the above proposition, as it respects the fleshly seed of

Abraham, until the introduction of the Gospel. They allow that, in virtue of their interest in the covenant, of which circumcision was the token, the infant seed of Abraham were initiated into the church by circumcision. But, in order to reconcile this acknowledged fact with their hostility to infant baptism, they are compelled to give a most erroneous view of God's ancient church and its initiating rite. It will therefore be necessary to direct the attention of the reader to a few remarks on this interesting branch of the argument.

At the period in which God instituted circumcision, the family of Abraham was the household of faith, or, in other words, the visible church of God, and circumcision was the appointed sign of church-membership. If we carefully examine the evidence contained in the Bible, we shall perhaps be led to conclude, that, in regard to purity and piety, it will bear to be compared with any of the churches planted by the apostles. This has been too much overlooked by the generality of pedobaptists, and uniformly denied by the baptists. One of their ablest advocates boldly affirms, "that Abraham's male infants, and even adults, were entitled to circumcision merely in virtue of their carnal descent; that this right they enjoyed independent of sanctifying grace, either in themselves or their parents, and even detached from every idea of a pretension to it, in the one or the other;" nay, "that the domestics of Abraham, whether in a carnal or regenerate state, were as fully entitled to it as their venerable master." Another of them confidently affirms, that the circumcision of Abraham's domestics was an affair of authority to which they must submit; that they might remonstrate and say, they neither feared, nor loved, nor worshipped the God of the Israelites; they were believers in another God, and they would not change their religion. All this might be true, but they must submit to be circumcised;" and, as has been formerly noticed, it is intimated by another, that the domestics of Abraham were circumcised to mark them as their master's property.

The above doctrine has been most zealously and extensively taught, especially among young and inexpe-

rienced believers, and, no doubt, it has been embraced by many without asking any questions. But let us turn our attention to what is taught in the Bible concerning the household of Abraham.—We learn,

In the first place, That before the members of Abraham's household were *circumcised*, they were *trained* or instructed. In Gen. xiv. 14, we read, that "when Abraham heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed or led forth his trained or instructed servants, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen." From the connexion in which the word *trained* stands, it has been generally applied to the art of war; but for doing so there is not the smallest authority. Abraham was no warrior; but we have the best authority for believing, that he was an eminent and successful instructor of his household in the ways of the Lord. God's own testimony to the fact affords the best illustration of the training intended. "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." Gen. xviii. 19. The term "know," in this verse, is used to express the same idea which is expressed by the same term, (Gen. xxii. 12,) or what we call experimental knowledge. "For now *I know* that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thine only son from me." Jehovah knew from the beginning what Abraham would be and do; but that is not the knowledge intended in the above texts. The first refers to the evidence Abraham had given of his fidelity, by instructing his numerous family in the way of the Lord; the second refers to the evidence he gave of his fearing the Lord, by his prompt obedience to the most trying command that ever was given by God to man.

When we reflect on the history of Abraham, as delineated in the Scriptures, it is incredible that he should neglect the religious instruction of his family. We know that every pious slave-master does pay some attention to the religious instruction of his slaves; and where this is neglected or opposed, it is a standing proof of the impiety of the mas-

ters. Is it possible for baptists themselves seriously to believe, that the Father of the faithful would impose on his servants the seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, without instructing them in its nature and design? Or that he either did or could compel *three hundred and eighteen men* to be circumcised against their will? So the able opposers of infant baptism teach, and so their simple disciples believe. But, to me at least, it is as incredible as the pope's doctrine of transubstantiation. The reader is entreated to observe further, that what Abraham did in commanding his household, the God of Abraham, by a standing law, enjoined on every head of a family among his future posterity. "For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children; that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children; that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments." Ps. lxxviii. 5—7.

This passage points out, with remarkable plainness, the duty and the interest of every head of a family in Israel, who, with his household, enjoyed the seal of God's covenant. Every Jewish householder, who neglected this commanded duty, denied the faith, forfeited all right to the covenant and its blessings, for himself and his infant offspring; or, in the language of inspiration, he "kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law." See verse 10. The opposers of infant baptism overlook these and similar facts, and fix on the gross abuses which prevailed among the Jews after they had apostatized, in general, from the faith and practice enjoined in God's holy covenant. These abuses they contrast with the purity enjoined on those who profess the faith of the Gospel, and more than insinuate, that the holy God sanctioned these abuses by the dispensation under which he placed his ancient church. Such conduct is as inconsistent with truth as it would be to ascribe all the abomina-

tions of the mother of harlots to the Gospel-dispensation, since both are alike opposed to what the God of salvation has commanded his people to believe and practise, under the law and under the Gospel.—But,

Secondly, We have positive evidence of the eminent piety of the members of Abraham's family. If the reader will consult Gen. xxiv. he will find a very instructive specimen of the unfeigned faith and the mutual piety of master and servant. Nor is this to be viewed as a solitary example. On the contrary, we are warranted to esteem it as a sample of the genuine religion exemplified in the church of God, as planted and nourished in the family of Abraham; of that church for which he originally appointed the token and seal of his holy covenant; of that church which he instituted to be, not the type, but the pattern of his church in future ages, as to her constituent members.

In proof of this, we remark, *thirdly*, that it stands confirmed by the testimony of God, who cannot lie. "I had planted thee a noble vine; WHOLLY A RIGHT SEED: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?" Jer. ii. 21. The vine he referred to is that which the Lord in due time brought out of Egypt, and planted in the land of Canaan, or, in other words, his visible kingdom, as distinguished from the world. Of this vine Abraham was the stock. His trained servants were not partakers of his flesh; but partaking, as we have seen they did, of his faith, they were, like believing Gentiles in every age, his spiritual children, and, as such, fellow-heirs of the promise, fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of faith.

When Jehovah planted this noble vine, he included all the tender buds and branches. In plainer terms, he ordained that the infant seed of his people should form a constituent part of his visible kingdom on earth. The opposers of infant baptism cannot deny this fact. They allow that this order of things continued until the Lord of the vine appeared; but they boldly affirm, without a shade of proof, that when he came to visit his vineyard, in mercy, with one blow of his axe he cut

off all the tender buds, and cast them over the hedge. But is this like the merciful mission of the compassionate Redeemer? Nay, verily, I feel assured, that wherever this is done, it cannot be justly ascribed to the owner of the vineyard,—it must be the work of some of those “little foxes which spoil the vine.”

The proof of this will be more fully manifested in the illustration of the third and last proposition.

III.—THE SCRIPTURES AFFORD US UNQUESTIONABLE EVIDENCE THAT THE LORD NEVER REVOKED HIS GRACIOUS GRANT TO THE INFANT SEED OF HIS PEOPLE; AND THAT BY HIS AUTHORITY THEY HAVE THE SAME RIGHT TO THE PLACE THEY ANCIENTLY HAD IN THE VISIBLE KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH.

As the doctrine of this proposition combines the most essential truths in question between those who condemn and those who practise infant baptism, it certainly demands a candid and patient investigation. Whatever hard things the baptists may say against infant baptism, until they shall attempt to meet and overturn the argument, no conviction can be produced in the mind of any person who understands the subject. The reader is therefore entreated to take his Bible, and, looking to Him who has promised to guide his people in the midst of the paths of judgment, let him candidly compare with it the following chain of evidence:—

I. *The remarkable terms in which the gracious grant was originally published, compared with the manifold references to it in the gradual development of the plan of redemption.* “And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed.” With a manifest reference to this generous grant, the church of God is taught thus to celebrate the loving-kindness of the Lord. “He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the

word which he commanded to a thousand generations: which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac; and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant. He sent redemption unto his people;—he hath commanded his covenant for ever.”* Ps. cv. 8, 9, 10, and cxi. 9.

The terms *for ever, everlasting covenant, a thousand generations, &c.*, are no doubt of the same import; and, to say the least, they certainly intimate, that the covenant to which they refer was to be of very long duration. The opposers of infant baptism maintain, that it terminated with the commencement of the Gospel-dispensation. But how can this be made to accord with the following fact?—If the reader will turn to Matt. i. 17, he will see that all the generations from Abraham to Christ are only forty-two. Is it believable, that when the Spirit of God says a THOUSAND GENERATIONS, he only meant FORTY-TWO GENERATIONS? But this is not the only difficulty that presents itself to the candid reader of the Scriptures. By attending to what the Spirit has testified in another Psalm, we shall see the most conclusive evidence, not only of the perpetuity of the covenant, but likewise of the perpetuity of God’s gracious grant to the children of his servants:—“But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children’s children; to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.” Ps. ciii. 17, 18.

All the mercy that Jehovah purposed or promised to guilty men, is virtually comprehended (as has been already hinted) in the great promise covenanted to Abraham, and his seed after him in their generations. Among other mercies, it contains his RIGHTEOUSNESS, which is unto all and upon all who believe. Abraham and his seed received circumcision,—the divinely-appointed seal of this righteousness; and the Psalmist as-

* The readers should compare the above with Micah vii. 18—20. Luke i. 67—71. Gal. iii. 13—18. Heb. vi. 13—20, and xiii. 20, 21.

asures us, that the same gracious privilege is from EVERLASTING TO EVERLASTING, not only to those parents who keep God's covenant, but also to their children's children. When the posterity of Abraham broke God's covenant, and refused to walk in his commandments, they forfeited its blessings for themselves and their seed after them in their generations. Hence their present degraded condition. But their unbelief could not affect God's covenant, nor render its promise of none effect. I know, that to a mind warped with baptist prejudice, this order of things will appear foolishness. This I have often lamented, but cannot help.

II. *No hint is given in the law or the prophets, that ever the Lord intended to recall his gracious grant; but, on the contrary, the prophets, with one voice, announce its continuance under Messiah's reign.* Had any such change been intended, there is every reason to think that the Lord would have given previous notice of it by some of his prophets. He did give the most explicit warning of his intention to abrogate the Sinai covenant, and to place his church under a new and a better dispensation. He likewise foretold the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles; but, instead of disannulling his covenant with Abraham, by abrogating what is called the old and establishing the new covenant, both prophets and apostles assure us, that the change should only be a performance of the mercy promised to Abraham. Let the reader compare the following texts for proof and illustration of these particulars:—Luke i. 54, 55. 67—75. Gal. iii. 15—18. Is. v. 1—7. Matt. xxi. 33—43. Jer. xxx. 18—22, and xxxi. 15, 16, 17. 31—34, and xxxii. 36—43. Heb. viii. 8—13.

The opposers of infant baptism endeavour to compel two of the above texts to pronounce the exclusion of infants from the church of Christ. The texts are,—Jer. xxxi. 31—34. Heb. viii. 8—13. They attempt to prove by them, that the covenant which includes the infant seed of believers is now done away. Most unfortunately for their system, both texts contain a

direct proof of the perpetuity of the Abrahamic covenant. The proof is the great promise,—“ I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.” The very design for which Jehovah promised to establish his covenant with Abraham and his seed for an everlasting covenant is, that he might be to them a God, &c. The baptists overlook this, and deduce from the prophecy the two following arguments:—

1st, “ The subjects of the new covenant shall know the Lord ; infants cannot know the Lord ; therefore infants have no interest in the new covenant.” The strength of this argument will appear by applying it, *first*, To the Hebrew believers. It will be allowed, that the change foretold by Jeremiah had commenced in their happy experience. The apostle, however, assures them, that so far were they from having attained that perfection of knowledge which the people of God shall all attain under Messiah’s reign, that they needed to be taught the first principles,—the A, B, C, of the oracles of God. See Heb. v. 12. Apply the baptist argument to the Hebrew converts, and it will exclude them, as well as their unconscious infants, from any interest in the new covenant. *Secondly*, Let us try the strength of this argument, by applying its doctrine to another promise of the same general import:—“ The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God,” &c. Deut. xxx. 6. Apply the baptist argument to the Jewish infants under the law, and it will cut them off from all interest in the covenants of promise. Infants cannot love the Lord ; but the promise is,—the Lord will circumcise the heart of his people’s seed to love the Lord ; therefore infants can have no interest in that covenant of which circumcision was the token, and ought not to receive that circumcision which is at once the sign of regeneration, and of visible connexion with the family of God.

2d, Another argument extorted from the prophecy under consideration is to this effect:—“ The covenant referred to cannot be the Abrahamic covenant, for it is expressly called *a new covenant* ; and it was not made

till many hundred years after Abraham slept with his fathers." Since I have commenced writing these pages, an event has taken place which will shew the entire strength of this argument. The OLD MOON has vanished away, and the NEW MOON has made its appearance. Now, although I feel assured that the present new moon is that very moon which the Lord made many hundred years before the birth of Abraham, if the baptists' argument be just, I must be in error. Let us see how it will apply. The present moon cannot be the moon which existed in the days of Abraham, for it is expressly called in the Scriptures the new moon (Ps. lxxxii. 3), and it did not appear till many hundreds of years after Abraham slept with his fathers.

I might dismiss this silly argument without further notice ; but as it is one of those with which the zealous opposers of infant baptism frequently perplex the minds of young believers, for their sake it may be proper to give it a more serious exposure. With this view, I remark, *first*, That the two covenants contrasted in the passage before us are not the *Abrahamic* and the *Gospel*, but the *Mosaic* and the *Gospel* dispensations of the Abrahamic or everlasting covenant. To be perfectly convinced of this, it is only necessary to read the passages. The covenant which waxed old and vanished away, is that which God made with the seed of Abraham, when he took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt. He redeemed them from Egypt in remembrance of his covenant with Abraham ; and the covenant he made with them on that occasion was merely a temporary mode of administering his everlasting covenant. When the time of reformation came, the everlasting covenant made with Abraham began to shine forth in a new and greatly-improved form of administration. On this account it is fitly called new. But this happy change, as will be fully manifested in course, instead of abrogating, confirmed the children of God's servants in the possession of their former privilege. This view of the two covenants is confirmed by what is stated, Gal. iii. 15—17. In this

passage the writer contrasts the Mosaic with the Abrahamic covenant; and while he points out the design of that temporary dispensation, he clearly proves, that neither its birth nor its burial could add to nor diminish from God's gracious grant to Abraham, and to his seed after him. No language can be more explicit:—"This I say, that the covenant that was confirmed of God before in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul that it should make the promise of none effect." But,

Secondly, It is well known, that, in the Scriptures, objects that are very old are sometimes called new, on account of their peculiar excellency. Hence we read of the "new song," "the new commandment," &c. That this is the case with regard to the everlasting covenant is manifest; for the promise to Abraham and the new covenant promise are exactly the same. "I will establish my covenant"—"to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee."—"I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." Compare Gen. xvii. 7, with Heb. viii. 10. Nor is this all; for I have to remark,

Thirdly, That, in the prophecy under consideration, the continuation of God's gracious grant to the children of his people is most explicitly announced. If the reader will consult his Bible, he will see that the prophecy commences with chap. xxx. In that chapter he will find, among other gracious promises, the following:—"I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will glorify them, and they shall not be small. THEIR CHILDREN ALSO SHALL BE AS AFORETIME."—"And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. At the same time, saith the Lord, will I be the God of all the FAMILIES of Israel, and they shall be my people." See Jer. xxx. 18—24, and xxxi. 1.

The above is the only prophecy which, so far as I recollect, the opposers of infant baptism have adduced to prove that the Gospel-dispensation has abolished the Abrahamic covenant, and cut off the infant seed of believers from the church of Christ. I will now put it to their own conscience, to lay their hand on their

heart, and, in the sight of God, deny the fact, that the prophecy proves the very opposite doctrine. When the Lord assures us, in a prophecy which respects the change to take place by the introduction of the Gospel-dispensation, that this change is to be an accomplishment of the mercy promised to Abraham and his seed after him, when he tells us that the children of his people shall be as aforetime, are we to understand him hereby informing us, that by this change he will abrogate his everlasting covenant, and disinherit the infant offspring of his redeemed people?

I might have multiplied proofs of the same kind from the Old Testament, but surely the above specimen is sufficient to satisfy those who tremble at the word of the Lord.

There is still one thing which must be noticed on this part of the subject; namely, the way in which the baptists attempt to “get over” the proof furnished by the prophets, that under the Gospel-dispensation the privileges of the children of God’s people remain as aforetime. The following is one of their most witty inventions, and it is one to which many of them constantly resort:—“The church is often addressed as a woman, and those who are brought into it are spoken of as her children, and blessings are promised to them. Of this we have a remarkable example, Ezek. xvi. 61, where Sodom and Samaria are promised to be given to Jerusalem for daughters. This is an intimation of the calling of the Gentiles, and it is particularly marked, but not by thy covenant. By it (viz. the apostate Jewish covenant), all the men of Israel, with their little ones, and their wives, became the people of God; but Sodom and Samaria were to become her daughters by faith in Jesus Christ.” In a note it is added,—“This affords a key to such passages as Jer. xxxii. 39;” that is, to such passages as foretell the continuation of the privileges of the children of God’s people under the Gospel.

The text referred to reads thus:—“I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them and of their children after them.”

As usual, the mercy here promised is marked as a part of that which was promised to Abraham and his seed after him ; for it is preceded by the ancient promise,—
 “ THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE, AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD.”

When a great and a good man proposes such a key to open the promises to which he refers, he must have been in a great strait. My present business is to examine its mettle. The chapter out of which the key is abstracted is truly remarkable. It exhibits to us, *1st*, The origin of ancient Israel previously to the call of Abraham, ver. 1—5 ; *2d*, The mercy vouchsafed to Abraham and his seed after him in their generations, ver. 6—14 ; *3d*, The gradual and shameful apostacy of the posterity of Abraham, whereby they broke God’s covenant, and entered into affinity or covenant with their heathen neighbours, and learned their abominations. Their conduct is fitly compared to that of an adulteress, who violates the marriage-covenant, and plays the harlot with all comers, ver. 15—59. Thus Israel as a nation had broken God’s covenant, and made a covenant of their own. But still there was among them a holy seed, a remnant according to the election of grace. The Lord promised that he would remember, so as to establish his own covenant with Abraham (see ver. 60) ; and his covenant with Abraham insured the future conversion, not only of the ten tribes of Israel, but also of the Gentiles. He assures them, that this should not be accomplished by their covenant,* but by his covenant which he would establish with them, as he promised to Abraham. See ver. 62.

Such then is the key with which the baptists have furnished us, for shutting the visible kingdom of God

* *Their covenant.* If the reader examine Jer. xliv., he will probably find out what *their* covenant really was. They had made a covenant to offer incense to the queen of heaven. This was truly their covenant ; and, as the Lord told them, Ezek. xvi. 59, by it they had sealed their apostacy from his covenant, and as explicitly sealed themselves and their children, not the people of God, as the baptists affirm, but the visible people of the devil. Compare ver. 20 with Ps. cvi. 34—38.

on earth against the infant seed of believers. But, blessed be God, we know the key is one of their own manufacture. The only key that will open the precious promises referred to is that which the king himself hath delivered to his church; namely, SUFFER THE LITTLE CHILDREN TO COME UNTO ME, AND FORBID THEM NOT; FOR OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

Having thus seen that the language in which the original grant to Abraham and his seed is recorded, and the references to it in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments clearly prove the perpetuity of the grant; that, instead of giving the least hint of its abrogation by the gospel, the prophets with one voice, foretold its continuance, in language which will admit of no other consistent meaning, I shall now direct the attention of the reader,

III.—*To the evidence contained in the New Testament, that Christ and his apostles explicitly confirmed, both by word and deed, the perpetuity of the ancient grant to the infant seed of believers.*—On this important branch of the argument, the first thing we notice is,—

THE VIEW GIVEN BY OUR LORD AND HIS APOSTLES OF THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH OF GOD UNDER BOTH DISPENSATIONS.

That a very great change took place in the church of God by the introduction of the Gospel-dispensation is certain. The whole system of the Levitical priesthood is for ever abolished. The priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a corresponding change in the law. Accordingly we find, that the law of commandments contained in ordinances is now for ever done away. This change the apostle justly denominates not a *dissolution*, but a *reformation* of the church of God. Heb. ix. 10.

But the baptists will have it, that our Lord came to dissolve the ancient church, and to build a new one, in which the infant seed of believers shall have no place. Before subscribing to this doctrine, we do well to

attend to the ancient question, "What saith the Scripture?" John the Baptist came to prepare the way of the Lord, and to proclaim the work assigned him. The following specimen of his preaching bears upon the subject under consideration:—"When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner: but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. See Matt. iii. 7—12.

We begin our proof of the unity of the church with this text, because it is one of those which the baptists bring forward to pronounce against infant baptism. "Indeed" (say they) "the admonition of the FIRST BAPTIST MINISTER on record is so full to the point we have been considering, that it ought never to be forgotten. Think not to say within yourselves, "We have Abraham to our father," &c.* The point which

* THE FIRST BAPTIST MINISTER.—I have not applied that name to the opposers of infant baptism which properly belongs to them; but I must protest against the impudence displayed in the above quotation; and I shall take the liberty of doing so in the words of Dr Dwight. "Those persons originally styled *Anabaptists* have claimed to themselves improperly the title of baptists, indicating that they only baptized or were baptized. While, therefore, I cheerfully acknowledge the distinguished piety and respectability of a considerable number of men in this class of Christians, I protest against their assumption of this name, so far as it is intended to indicate that others do not baptize, and are not baptized, agreeably to the principles of the gospel. The name

the author brings the above text to prove is, that in it the baptist distinctly announced, that his master was coming after him with his axe to cut off, and cast out of his church, all the infant seed of his people. We really have no wish to forget the solemn admonition referred to; and we are sure that those ministers who do not enforce its doctrine on the consciences of their hearers are unfaithful. One of our objections to the baptist system is, that, upon their principles, they cannot consistently fulfil this part of commanded duty. Believing, as they maintain, that by being immersed in water, they are thereby “declared to be partakers of the circumcision of the heart;” they cannot consistently adopt the spirit of the baptist’s admonition in addressing their disciples. But while we wish to keep the admonition in memory, we cannot admit our friend’s commentary on it. To make it suit the purpose for which it is so frequently quoted by the baptists, it must be understood as an intimation, that the Lord of the vineyard was coming with his axe to cut up the ancient vine, root and branches, and to plant an exotic in its stead. In other words, that he was coming to destroy the ancient church, and set up a new one. But the passage proves the contrary. The Saviour came not to dissolve, but to purge his floor. “Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly PURGE HIS FLOOR, and gather his wheat into the garner: but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.” Ver. 12.

If the reader will compare the passage under consideration with what the prophet Malachi foretold, he will see with his own eyes what kind of characters the Saviour came to cut down. We quote the following specimen:—“Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye

Anabaptist, originally given to them, because they re-baptized those who had received baptism in infancy, is, in every view, less exceptionable.”—DWIGHT’S THEOLOGY.

The truth is, and it should be remembered, that they have usurped the name BAPTIST by the same authority, and for the same purpose, that Antichrist has usurped the term CATHOLIC.

seek, shall suddenly come to his temple ; but who may abide the day of his coming ? and who shall stand when he appeareth ? for he is like a refiner's fire," &c. " For behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven ; and all the PROUD, yea, and all that do WICKEDLY, shall be as stubble ; and the day that cometh shall burn them up," &c. See Mal. iii. 1, 2. iv. 1.

Both Malachi and John the Baptist tell us plainly, that the characters which Christ came to cast out of his church are such as resemble the chaff and the stubble, or, in other words, " all the proud, all that do wickedly." And now, to have done with this passage, if the opposers of infant baptism will shew me a single text that proves that Christ, or any of his apostles, cut off a single individual, except " the proud and such as did wickedly," a single individual that would have been an acceptable worshipper in the Old Testament church, I will yield them this part of the argument.

Let us now attend to the description which Christ himself gave of the change foretold by Malachi and John the Baptist. Addressing a company of " the proud" who were " doing wickedly," he thus announced their approaching excision : THE KINGDOM OF GOD SHALL BE TAKEN FROM YOU, AND GIVEN TO A NATION BRINGING FORTH THE FRUITS THEREOF. See Matt. xxi. 33—43. The vineyard in the parable, of which the above is the application, evidently means the church or visible kingdom of God. If human language can express any fact with sufficient precision, the Saviour's words prove that it was substantially the same kingdom undiminished, as well as undissolved, that was taken from those Jews who had apostatized from the faith of Abraham, and given to the believing Gentiles, who, like Abraham's *trained servants*, had become his children by faith. That such is precisely the meaning of our Lord's words, will be further manifest by the apostle's description of their begun accomplishment.

" For if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy ; and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive-tree, wert grafted in among them, and with

them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-tree ; boast not against the branches : but if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, the branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well ; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear : For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee." Rom. xi. 16.—21.

In this chapter the apostle explains the nature of that change which was foretold by John Baptist and by Christ in the passages before noticed. Let any person, whether baptist or pedobaptist, read it attentively ; and, if he can forget his system, it will be impossible for him not to see that it proves the unity of the church of God, under the Abrahamic, the Mosaic, and the gospel dispensations of the everlasting covenant. The good olive-tree is, in other words, the church or vineyard of the Lord of Hosts, as planted in the family of Abraham, and consisting chiefly of his offspring, until Christ came. Let us notice the view here given of the change which had now taken place. The good olive-tree was still the same ; but, *1st, Some of the natural branches were broken off.* By the natural branches are evidently meant the seed of Abraham according to the flesh. This illustrates John Baptist's faithful warning, Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father. Now also the axe is laid to the root of the trees ; therefore every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, &c. See Matt. iii. 9, 10. The branches which were thus cut off from the good olive-tree, as the prophet had foretold, were " the proud," all " who did wickedly." Their future posterity were of course broken off with them. Observe, *2d, Only some of the natural branches were broken off.* We learn from the scriptures, that for some time the gospel church consisted of the natural posterity of Abraham, and that its members were very many and very good. In Acts xxi. 20, we are told that many myriads (literally many ten thousands) of Jews believed. They were the natural branches of their own good olive-tree ; and we are sure, that by God's gra-

cious grant, all their infant offspring had in it a common interest with their parents. We know likewise, that all the myriads of Jews who believed were baptized, and that with them their infants were holy, (*i. e.* separated by the word of God, and prayer, for holy purposes); for “if the root be holy, so are the branches.” Now, one of two things must have been done to all these holy branches, either they were baptized with their parents, or they were cut off from their own good olive-tree, of which they were the natural branches.

The baptists stoutly maintain the latter alternative, namely, that all these holy branches were unmercifully cut off; and that too without any fault either in themselves or their parents. But can any mode of reasoning make this doctrine credible to those who understand the subject? By no means. It outrages the Scripture doctrine of the plan of mercy, and of God’s conduct towards the infant seed of his people, under every dispensation of his mercy, since the world began. Some of the natural branches were broken off, and, of course, their infant offspring with them; but not an individual, old or young, was cut off, but either for their own or their parent’s wilful and avowed unbelief. If any opposer of infant baptism will show me a single text that proves, directly or indirectly, by any acknowledged rule of just interpretation, that one single unconscious infant of all the many ten thousands of Jews which composed the first gospel churches was cast out, I will yield the question at issue. But, as no such text exists, and as no such excision took place, I feel bound to hold it for certain that the infants were all baptized; for, from the period in which the Saviour ascended up on high, no unbaptized person, old or young, could have a visible place in his church on earth. But observe,

3d, *While some of the natural branches were cut off, because of unbelief,—others, originally belonging to a wild olive-tree, were, by faith, grafted in, CONTRARY TO NATURE, (see verse 24,) to partake with the natural branches of the root and fatness of the olive-tree, verse 17.* This was the begun accomplishment of another

promise of God's everlasting covenant to Abraham. (Let the reader compare Gen. xii. 3, and xvii. 5, with Rom. iv. 9—13, Gal. iii. 7—9.) The branches which were thus grafted in contrary to nature were the believing Gentiles. Thus they became the spiritual seed of Abraham, and heirs according to the promise. See Gal. iii. 26—29. The apostle elsewhere assures us, that with them their children are holy. (See 1 Cor. vii. 14.) This order God had established from the beginning:—"For if the root be holy, so are the branches." Rom. xi. 16. Now the question is, Were all these holy branches shut out, when their parents were grafted in? The baptists maintain they were; but "what say the scriptures?" The Lord of the vineyard has told us that it was the same kingdom which was thus taken from the unbelieving Jews, and given to the believing Gentiles; we find the Gentile infants in the church of Christ, and addressed as IN THE LORD; Eph. vi. 1—4. How then can we embrace that system which shuts them all out? Once more;—*The passage informs us, that the natural branches shall in due time be grafted in again to their own olive-tree.* See Rom. xi. 26—29. When this shall have been accomplished, is it credible that all their infant offspring shall be shut out? So the baptists profess to believe: but what say the scriptures? "The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, my spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy SEED'S SEED, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever." They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble: for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and THEIR OFFSPRING with them. THEIR CHILDREN ALSO SHALL BE AS AFORETIME, &c. Is. lix. 20, 21, and lxv. 17—25. Jer. xxx. 18—22. Let the reader compare these with Rom. xi. 24—29.

The happy restoration clearly foretold in these texts is to be in accomplishment of God's everlasting cove-

nant with Abraham and his seed. The reader is again entreated to keep in memory the fact, that when the natural branches shall thus be grafted in again to their own good olive-tree, one of two things must happen ; either their children must be shut out, or they must be brought in with their parents by baptism. We are assured that they shall not be shut out, for they are blessed with their parents ; and the promise is, **THEIR CHILDREN SHALL BE AS AFORETIME.** It remains then that they must be introduced by baptism, for that is the only initiating ordinance in the gospel-church.

I must request the reader's patience while I direct his attention to one passage more which bears upon this branch of the argument.

“ But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us ; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances ; for to make in himself of twain one new man,” &c. Eph. ii. 13—22.

The doctrine taught in this passage is precisely the same with that which has been already stated, only the figures are varied. Instead of the good olive-tree and its branches, we have a good house and a growing family. Before Christ was manifested in the flesh, the family consisted chiefly of the natural posterity of Abraham. Between the Gentiles and the visible family of God, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, was a middle wall of partition. Until Christ finished the work which his father gave him to do, it behoved every believing Gentile to submit to the law of commandments, or be shut out from the family. See Ex. xii. 48, 49. But Christ, by his obedience unto death, fulfilled what was typified by the law of commandments ; and thus broke down the middle wall of partition. Still the house or family of God is substantially the same. Every one must see that there is a serious difference between the breaking down of a certain partition in a house and pulling down the house itself. Jesus did not pull down the ancient church,

and build a new one out of its ruins, as the baptists affirm; he only pulled down a certain partition, which, though useful for a time, like the scaffolding of a building, had no necessary connexion with the house. The unity of the church, under both dispensations, is luminously displayed in this passage. The question is, Did Jesus, when he broke down the middle wall of partition, cut off and cast out all the infant seed of those believing Jews, who had formerly formed a constituent, a numerous, and a hopeful part of his family? And did he, at the same time, bolt the door against all the infant seed of those numerous believing Gentiles who were thus admitted into the family of God? So the baptists teach with one voice. But what say the Scriptures? Reader, hear and judge for yourself. "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone," &c. Eph. ii. 19—22.

If the church of Christ be indeed built on the foundation of the prophets, then we are sure that the infants are not excluded; for with one voice they assure us, that THE CHILDREN SHALL BE AS AFORETIME. If it be built on the foundation of the apostles, then we are assured that the children still retain their former place in the family; for we find the apostle, in this same epistle, actually addressing the children, TO BE BROUGHT UP, as forming a constituent part of the church of Christ in Ephesus. See Chap. vi. 1—4.

Now, candid reader, what is the legitimate, the necessary inference, from the foregoing premises? Is it not, that those churches which exclude the infant seed of believers are, in this part of their conduct, aside from the foundation of both prophets and apostles?

Before dismissing this part of the subject, it will be proper to examine the view which the baptists give of the difference between the Old and New Testament churches. To the evidence of their substantial unity, to a part of which the reader's attention has now been

directed, the baptists oppose what they call the *car-nality* of the one and the *spirituality* of the other. A few remarks on this supposed difference seem necessary to complete our proof of the present article. The reader must be reminded, that the question at issue is not, What the Jewish people actually were under the Mosaic dispensation of the Abrahamic covenant, but what the church of God, as instituted by him, ought to have been under that dispensation, and what he uniformly commanded all who professed the faith of his covenant to be and to do? It is lamentably manifest, that the bulk of Abraham's posterity, in every age, "were proud and did wickedly;" but it is no less evident, that those who were so, proved themselves to be breakers of God's covenant, and notorious apostates from the faith and the practice which he enjoined; and if God's own testimony be admitted as sufficient proof of the fact, such characters had no right to a place in his church, nor to make mention of his holy covenant. "Unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee." Psalm l. 16, 17.

It is true, that, at the period referred to, the church of God was placed under a dispensation of carnal ordinances; but it is equally true, that, in observing those ordinances, the people were bound to be spiritual; and it is no less certain, that every acceptable worshipper under the law was spiritual. In connexion with the law of commandments contained in ordinances, the Lord gave them precepts and promises, for the rule of their faith and practice, which are just as spiritual as those given in the New Testament. For example,—
 "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."
 "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Deut. vi. 5. Levit. xix. 18. These are not solitary examples; they are descriptive of what is essential to every part of that worship which God enjoined under the law. Hence the Saviour's testimony,—ON THESE

TWO COMMANDMENTS HANG ALL THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS.

If the reader will examine the holy precepts, and attend to the spiritual worship which the Lord enjoined by Moses, and by all the prophets, on his professed people, under the law ; if he will listen to the alarming threatenings denounced on those who overlooked these, and rested in their carnal descent and external privileges and observances ; and if he will carefully compare these with what is enjoined and threatened in the New Testament on those who profess the gospel, he will then see with his own eyes, that in this respect there is no difference between the church of God under the Mosaic and gospel dispensations. Let those who maintain the contrary, try if they can bring one text from the Old Testament to prove that any thing short of true holiness and spiritual worship was enjoined by or acceptable in the sight of God under that dispensation.

Next to the natural depravity of the human heart, I know nothing that has contributed more to blind people's minds, not merely on the subject of baptism, but on a great part of the revelation of mercy, than the mass of error which the opposers of infant baptism have published, and continue to publish, on the ancient church of God. A conviction of this must apologize for the length and tediousness of the present discussion.

By the baptists the ancient church, as divinely instituted, is uniformly pronounced *a carnal church*, composed of *carnal worshippers*, and depending on *carnal ordinances*. Jehovah calls circumcision the token of his covenant ; the apostle calls it the seal of the righteousness of the faith which Abraham had, and assures us that they only who are of the faith are blessed with Abraham ; but the baptists, with fearful boldness, maintain that circumcision referred exclusively to carnal things, and belonged exclusively to carnal men. Thus they contrast circumcision with baptism : “ Circumcision initiated the *carnal seed* into the *carnal church*, and gave them a right to carnal *ordinances* ; but baptism gives the *spiritual seed* an entrance to the *spiritual church*, and a right to partake

of *spiritual ordinances*, Baptism is an appointment *purely religious*, and intended for purposes *purely spiritual*; but circumcision had a *political aspect*, being a sign of *carnal descent*, a mark of *national distinction*, and a token of interest in those temporal blessings that were promised to Abraham."

The erroneous doctrine in this contrast has already been noticed, and it will fall under consideration on another branch of the subject. I have inserted it in this place to introduce a fact which will help to dispel the dust which has been heaped upon God's ancient church by the epithet *CARNAL*. The fact is, that, from first to last, the term carnal is never once given in the Bible to *one* or to *all* of the constituent members of the Old Testament church. Not an individual of those who received the sign of circumcision are ever called carnal, unless such of them as had openly apostatized. If the reader has never had his attention directed to the subject before, and if his ears have been dunned, like the writer's, with the sing-song of *carnal church, carnal seed, carnal descent*, &c., he will perhaps be surprised to learn, that the epithet *carnal* is only applied twice in the Bible to any thing pertaining to the church of God under the law; and it will no doubt surprise him still more to hear, that it is repeatedly given to the constituent members of the Gospel-church. The only examples of its application to any thing that pertained to the ancient church are, Heb. vii. 16, and ix. 10. The following is an example of its repeated application to the members of the Gospel-church: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto *carnal*.—For ye are yet *carnal*: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not *carnal*? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not *carnal*? 1 Cor. iii. 1. 3, 4. If the opposers of infant baptism would judge by the rule presented to them in this text, it would perhaps shew them the folly of their boasting, which is so glaringly manifest in the contrast they give of the imaginary *carnality* of God's ancient church, and the no less ima-

ginary *spirituality* of their own churches. In the mean time, the reader may see that, although the epithet *carnal* is twice applied to the ceremonial law, in contrast with the spiritual things which were typified by its ordinances, it is never applied, by the spirit of God, to the church, properly so called; that is, the members, which, according to the Divine constitution, consisted of visible believers and their offspring. I have not forgotten, however, that a term of the same import is repeatedly given to some of the posterity of Abraham, which claims particular attention, and which will lead to the examination of a question which is of vital importance in the present discussion. The question respects the two seeds distinguished and contrasted in the following texts:—

“For they are not all Israel who are of Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but in Isaac shall thy seed be called: that is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.”—“Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit, even so it is now,” &c. Rom. ix. 6—8. Gal. iv. 28, 29.

In these texts the line of distinction is clearly marked between the two seeds. The question is, Who are the parties here contrasted? By comparing the texts specified with parallel passages, the reader will find ample evidence that the following is the only just answer to the important question:—

First, By the “children of the flesh” is not meant the posterity of Abraham as such, but such of his posterity as rejected the covenant-promise by an evil heart of unbelief;—such of them as in one way or other disregarded God’s merciful design in establishing his covenant with Abraham and his seed after him. Of these the apostle specifies Ishmael and Esau, and exhibits them as the type (not of the church of God under the law, as the baptists most erroneously insinu-

ate), but the appropriate type of those Jews, in every age, who rejected God's counsel, especially that generation of them who rejected Christ when he was manifested in the flesh. Thus, in the apostle's allegory, the bond woman and her son represent, not the church of God under the Mosaic dispensation, but that part of the posterity of Abraham which had rejected Christ, and trusted in their carnal descent and in the observance of the abolished ceremonies. "For this Hagar is (*i. e.* represents) mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to THE JERUSALEM WHICH NOW IS, and is in bondage with her children." Gal. iv. 25. In other words, answereth to the then state of the unbelieving Jews, the children of the flesh, which the apostle contrasts with the children of the promise.

Secondly, By the children of the promise, who are born after the Spirit, is not meant the members of the Gospel-church in contradistinction to the divinely-constituted members of the church under the law, but all in every age, whether Jews or Gentiles, who, under the teaching of the Spirit, like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, embraced and held fast the promises of the everlasting covenant.

By the first birth, Isaac and Jacob were as carnal as were Ishmael and Esau. The question is, By what means did they become spiritual? And the apostle distinctly answers the question: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth," &c. See Heb. xi. 8—16. The promises which they embraced were none other than the promises of the Abrahamic covenant, especially God's promise to be their God. See ver. 16. This promise, by God's gracious grant, originally belonged alike to Ishmael and to Esau, and was undoubtedly presented alike to them as well as to Isaac and Jacob as soon as they could discern between the right hand and the left. God's testimony concerning Abraham assures us, that he would not neglect to train up his children in the knowledge of that covenant which the Lord had pro-

mised to establish between him and them. See Gen. xviii. 19.

But Ishmael and Esau despised the future good promised. See Gal. iv. 29. Heb. xii. 15, 16, 17. Of course they continued mere children of the flesh. In all succeeding ages, a similar distinction has been found among the posterity of Abraham until Christ came; but in no period of their history was the distinction between the mere children of the flesh and those who were born after the Spirit, by the incorruptible seed, so strikingly manifested as it was by that event. See John i. 11, 12, 13.

The apostle's testimony will illustrate and confirm the answer given to the question in the above remarks, and with it I shall conclude this part of the argument. "For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." Rom. ii. 28, 29.

The preceding remarks on the unity of the church under the Abrahamic, the Mosaic, and the Gospel dispensations of the covenant of mercy will prepare us for attending,

2d, To the Saviour's conduct towards the infant seed of his people, when he appeared with his fan in his hand to purge his floor.

The following is a pleasing evidence that he did not despise the little ones, nor authorise any man to cast them out of his spiritual kingdom:

"Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven," &c. &c. Matt. xix. 13—15. See also Mark x. 13—16. Luke xviii. 15, 16, 17.

The children brought to Christ, on the occasion referred to, were unconscious infants, such as he could

and did take up in his arms. The end for which they were brought was, that Jesus might lay his hands on them and pray; in other words, that he might solemnly bless them, which we know he did. The disciples rebuked them, no doubt, under the idea that unconscious infants could not understand what Jesus said or did. But let us attend to what Jesus said and did. MARK informs us, that when Jesus saw the conduct of his disciples, he was *much displeased*. MUCH DISPLEASED! Reader, ponder these words. If Jesus was much displeased with this part of the conduct of his disciples, his displeasure demonstrates the magnitude of their error. I would beseech the zealous opposers of infant baptism to pause, and consider, and pray over the fact. Have we any reason to think that Jesus is *less displeased* with those mistaken disciples, who use every means in their power to prevent his people from bringing their infants to him, in that ordinance which he hath appointed for recognising them as a part of his family? Mark again, reader, what Jesus did and said. He took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them; and for his conduct he assigned the following memorable reason: FORBID THEM NOT TO COME UNTO ME, FOR OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. What MATTHEW calls the kingdom of heaven the other evangelists call the kingdom of God. Both terms mean exactly the same thing, viz.—the reign of Jehovah's grace in the church militant and triumphant. Whatever is done agreeably to the mind of God in his kingdom on earth, must accord with his covenant of promise to Abraham. Messiah's reign, in all its extent and perpetuity, is only the reign of that sovereign mercy covenanted to Abraham, and his seed after him in their generations. The baptists maintain, that Jesus has cut off the infant seed of his people from the interest he had formerly given them in his everlasting covenant, and cast them out of his kingdom on earth. When he uttered the memorable words, OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, he must have intended by them either to cut off the little ones, or to confirm their ancient privilege for ever. There is no

other alternative; and here we and the opposers of infant baptism are at issue. They have, of course, adopted the first alternative. I shall therefore bring it to the test. They maintain, that when Jesus said, **OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN**, he meant, in other words, "Of such adults as have been born again, and resemble these little ones in the temper of their minds, is the kingdom of heaven; and that hence an end is put to the ancient church-membership of infants." If such be really our Lord's meaning, his words and actions, on the occasion specified, must be thus paraphrased:

"Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for whereas, by my everlasting covenant, hitherto they have been a constituent part of my kingdom on earth, they are to be so no longer. I am come to perform the mercy promised to Abraham, and to his seed for ever. Luke i. 55. 72. It is a part of my merciful office to cut these and all such little children off, and to cast them out of my kingdom. My kingdom shall henceforth consist of such adults as have been born again, and resemble these little children, upon whom I now lay my hands, and on whom I pronounce **MY EFFECTUAL BLESSING**. Henceforward, therefore, let these children, and all such (**FOR OF ALL SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD**), be cast out of my kingdom, and treated as heathens; and let none of my disciples ever presume to receive any such children, in my name, into my kingdom, because they belong to me."

Persons who have paid little attention to the subject may think the above paraphrase rather extended; but for its fidelity I confidently appeal to the opposers of infant baptism. I ask them if it contains a single idea that is not implied in their exposition of the clause, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven?" and I must say, that if Jesus did not mean to recognise the church-membership of the infant seed of believers, his words will admit of no other meaning than that given in the paraphrase. Either he has confirmed their former privilege, or he has, on this occasion, disinherited the

little ones for ever. If he did not exclude them from his family on earth on this memorable occasion, he never did it at any future period. But the truth is, our Lord's words and actions are so plain, that, if he be allowed to have spoken intelligibly, he has most explicitly confirmed the comfortable truth, that under the Gospel the children of believers SHALL BE AS AFORETIME.

I shall now proceed to examine,

3d, Our Lord's commission to his apostles.

“Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”—

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”—
Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. Mark xvi. 15, 16.

I have been accustomed to esteem Christ's commission the most merciful, as well as the most extensive that ever was issued by the God of salvation ; but, if the baptists' commentary be just, it contains an article which, for unmerited severity, is without a parallel in the revelation of mercy. The article to which we allude is that which cuts off all the infant seed of God's people from the interest they formerly had in the everlasting covenant, and from the place which they formerly enjoyed in God's kingdom on earth. The clause from which this unmerciful article is extorted is, “He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.” It is obvious to remark, that while our friends will admit of no evidence from inference in favour of infants on the subject of baptism, it is by inference exclusively, and inference the most erroneous, that they extort the article in question from the premises, viz. “Infants cannot believe,”—“therefore infants must not be baptized.” Beyond this the baptists feel no disposition to extend the inference ; but, in order to expose its fallacy,

it may be proper to trace it to its legitimate length. If, because infants cannot believe, we must infer that they must not be baptized, by the same rule we are bound to infer that infants must not be saved. Nay, this last inference seems much better warranted than the first. Jesus did not say, he that believeth not shall not be baptized; but he declares explicitly, without any limitation of age, "He that believeth not shall be damned." Nor is this all; from the same premises the baptists infer, that the merciful Redeemer has not only prohibited the baptism of infants, but that he has also cut off all the infant seed of believers from any interest in his covenant of mercy. Now, if this be the case, the infants are left to perish without remedy; for there is no mercy for young or old but what is contained in God's covenant with Abraham, which was confirmed in Christ, four hundred and thirty years before the giving of the law. See Gal. iii. 15—17.

I feel no disposition to conceal the fact, that our friends profess to believe, that those who die in infancy are saved; but I must say, that in this they are inconsistent. Upon their avowed principles, they have no more authority to believe that such of their offspring as die in infancy are saved, than they have to conclude that those adults who have lived and died in unbelief are in heaven. According to their system both are alike without Christ, and without any interest in the covenants of promise; and the Bible intimates, that all who are so are without hope. Moreover, as the baptists believe that their children may be saved without any interest in the covenant of mercy, in order to be consistent, they are bound to train up their offspring in this belief; but to me it seems nothing less than presumptuous sin, to believe or teach, that young or old may be saved in any other way but by the mercy promised in Christ, to Abraham and to his seed after him, in their generations. Gen. xvii. 7.

It has been already hinted, that the baptists' exposition of our Lord's commission makes him the author of a standing law, in his kingdom, which for its

severity* is without a parallel. This seems strange indeed; but I have now to notice what is still more wonderful; namely, that this severity is evidently unmerited. The truth of these observations will be obvious, by attending to the actual state of the church of God at the period in which the commission was given. We are certain, that at that time the church of Christ was composed of adult believers and their infant offspring. The faith and hope of the parents, in their own behalf, and in the behalf of their children, was grounded upon and nourished by the promise, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations." "From this breast of consolation they had hitherto drunk the fatness of their own good olive-tree;" and to it they had been accustomed to lead their children from their infancy. (Compare Ps. lxxviii. 5—7, with 2 Tim. iii. 14, 15.) But, on baptist principles, they must do so no more. By the free grace of God, the little ones enjoyed this mercy in virtue of their connexion with their parents; but now this connexion is supposed to be for ever dissolved. These are plain facts which bid defiance to quibble. Now what had the parents done to merit the severe mandate which cut off their children from their "own good olive-tree?" Reader, hear it and wonder. Their great offence was, that, when the Lord of the vineyard came, they cordially embraced him, and (if we admit the baptists' commentary), he, in return, cut off all their infants, and cast them over the hedge of the vineyard, without cause, without mercy, and without hope, and without a single murmur or complaint from the lips of any of their parents.

* Some of my readers may be offended at the repeated use of the term *severity*. To prevent this, I beg leave to say, that I borrowed it from the apostle. See Rom. xi. 22. If the apostle is justified in using the term when speaking of the excision of the unbelieving Jews, no fault can justly be found for the use made of it in the above remarks.

The opposers of infant baptism will not like to see their favourite argument extended to its legitimate length, as has been attempted above. I have no wish to displease any of them; but knowing, as I certainly do, that many simple-hearted Christians have been persuaded to embrace the system without taking the time, or using the necessary means of discovering the various bearings of the principles they have embraced, and knowing, that others are exposed to the same snare,—for their sake, I feel it to be an imperious duty, with the most cordial good-will to the advocates of the system, to attempt an exposure of their errors in the plainest possible manner.

I feel confident, that the idea of cutting off the infants from his visible kingdom on earth was as remote from the Saviour's mind, when he gave the commission, as the east is from the west; and, likewise, that his own words plainly enough discover, that he neither had nor could have any such design. In endeavouring to produce the same conviction in the mind of the reader, it will be necessary to examine the phraseology of the commission more minutely than our friends generally do. Those who understand the Greek language will see, that the following criticism, from the pen of an old divine, is both natural and just:—

“ If the commission (Matt. xxviii.) excludes none from baptism but such as are to be excluded by the order to be therein observed, and if baptizing and teaching are to precede or follow one or the other, as there named by Christ, then these two conclusions will follow: (1.) That infants are not there excluded from baptism. (2.) That a person may be baptized before he be taught; for there we have, *first*, μαθητευσατε παντα τα εθνη, disciple all nations; make them disciples, or Christians. *Secondly*, We have βαπτιζοντες και διδασκοντες, which literally to translate, is baptizing and teaching. Now then discipling being a general word, that contains in it the two others that follow, viz. baptizing and teaching; and being the *imperative mood*, whereas the two others are participles, it is manifest, that the

whole command, or commission, is given in that, and the mode of execution in these. And if the mode of executing that general commission be expressed in these, where baptizing is first, and teaching comes after, what is become of the order of the *anabaptists* that has been so long talked of?"

The above comment, on the words of the commission, will stand the most rigid investigation. Nay more, I feel persuaded, that, by the legitimate rules of criticism, they cannot be otherwise expounded. And, instead of cutting off the infant seed of believers, as the baptists affirm, like the rest of the Saviour's words and actions relative to the little ones, his commission establishes them in the immutable enjoyment of their ancient privileges. Nor, in fact, could it have been otherwise, since we are sure, that "Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision," not to *disannul*, but "to *confirm* the promises made to the fathers." Rom. xv. 8.

There is no ambiguity in the commission, nor in the above exposition of it, to those who understand the language in which it was originally recorded. And it is presumed, that an answer to two questions, which naturally arise out of the words, will make it sufficiently plain to the most illiterate disciple of Christ. Let the question be, 1st, What did Christ command his apostles to do? The commission informs us, he commanded them to go and disciple all nations, or make them scholars. This is manifestly the entire work he commissioned them to do; but a second question is necessary, viz., In what way did Jesus direct his apostles to make disciples? The answer furnished to this question by the commission is, By baptizing and teaching. By baptism they were solemnly to enter them into the school of Christ, or into the church or visible family of God on earth, that in it they might be taught all things which Christ has commanded his people to observe and practise.

It is too well known, that this plan for making disciples is at variance with that of the baptists in more respects than one. They embrace every opportunity of

instilling the peculiarities of their system into the minds of simple-hearted believers, or newly-awakened sinners. If they succeed in their object, they then immerse them in water. I am grieved to add, that after immersion too many of them seem to have little more to learn, but to imitate their leaders, in endeavouring by all means to make proselytes to their party from other denominations.

But the plan enjoined in our Lord's commission was no innovation. There had been in his visible kingdom, at least from the days of Abraham, a standing law for making disciples from the Gentiles exactly in the plan he enjoined, with this circumstantial difference, that baptism is substituted in the room of circumcision.

The following is a transcript of the law to which we refer; and it will tend to give additional light on this part of the subject:—

“When a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let HIM come near and keep it; and he shall be as one born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. One law shall be to him that is home-born, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you.” Ex. xii. 48, 49. Agreeably to this standing law, the stranger who proposed to join the church of God, and was found qualified, was with his children made disciples by circumcision; and they were such, that they might be taught all things which Christ commanded by the ministry of Moses. The apostles were familiar with this law for making disciples; and it was impossible for them to have understood the commission under consideration in any other light than that in which it has now been placed. That they did so understand it will be further manifest by attending,

4th, To the account we have in the Scriptures of the way in which the apostles executed their commission.

That part of the commission, which is the more immediate subject of examination, chiefly respects the Gentiles; and the conduct of the apostles in making

the Gentile families disciples by baptism illustrates the commission. The baptism of the offspring of the believing Jews was a matter of course. But it may be profitable to advert briefly to the way in which the apostles fulfilled their ministry among the *Jews first*.

The attentive reader of the Acts of the apostles must have observed, that, in addressing the Jews, the grand fact to which they uniformly directed their attention is, **THAT JESUS WHO WAS CRUCIFIED IS THE MESSIAH PROMISED TO THE FATHERS.** The reader may consult the following examples:—Acts ii. 22—36, and iii. 12—18, and iv. 8—12, and v. 29—32, and ix. 19—22, and xiii. 16—41, and xvii. 1—3. Before Christ came in the flesh, the faith of the ancient church was, that, agreeably to Jehovah's covenant-promise, Messiah would assuredly come and redeem his people from all evil; and now that he had actually come, it was necessary that a corresponding change should take place in this article of the faith, and likewise in the external administration of the everlasting covenant. In order to convince the Jews that Jesus is the Christ, the apostles directed their attention to the ancient promises and predictions; especially those which testified, before hand, the sufferings of the promised Messiah, and following glory. At the same time they demonstrated, that these promises and prophecies had been fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had rejected and crucified, whom God had raised from the dead. As soon as few or many embraced and confessed this change in their former creed, viz. that the Messiah is come, or that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of God, they were instantly made disciples by baptism, that thenceforward they and theirs might be taught to observe all things whatsoever Christ had commanded. Thus, agreeably to the commission the apostles received, they made disciples by baptizing and teaching.* It remains for the opposers of infant bap-

* We have the testimony of some of the earliest fathers, as they are called, that within less than half a century after MATTHEW wrote the commission, it was understood and obeyed as we have expounded it.

tism to try if they can produce any instance in which they deviated from this plan. But, again,—

In fulfilling their commission, with the parents, the apostles uniformly baptized their household,—in other words, their families or children. To assure us of this fact, we have the three following examples recorded. The family of Lydia. Acts xvi. 14, 15. The family of the Jailer. Verse 33. The family of Stephanas. 1 Cor. i. 16. It is not necessary to notice the arguments that have been urged to persuade the simple, that there were no infants in these families; in my view, they are really below contempt, although confidently urged by men of eminent piety and talents. But there are two facts which merit attention: (1.) The examples specified were by no means singular. They are only specimens of what was the uniform practice of the apostles in executing their commission. To deny this is to deny the truth of the apostle's own testimony; for he assures us, that he both taught and ordained the same things every where and in every church. See 1 Cor. iv. 17, and vii. 17. (2.) The examples recorded afford us more evidence that it is a standing law in the church of Christ, that families are to be made disciples by baptism, than the whole Old Testament affords of the undisputed fact, that it was a standing law in the same church under the Mosaic dispensation, to make disciples of Gentile families by circumcision. The divine command for both is alike explicit and complete; but in as far as recorded example bears on the subject, the evidence is, at least, three times greater in behalf of the rule for making families disciples by baptism. The commission for proselyting Gentile families under

JUSTIN MARTYR, who wrote about ninety years after Matthew, thus attests the fact: "Many men and women, of sixty and seventy years of age, who had been disciplined (*εμαθητευσαν*) to Christ from infancy," &c. In terms sufficiently plain JUSTIN here testifies, that the *many* men and women to which he refers were made disciples to Christ by baptism, in infancy, not more than twenty or thirty years after Matthew recorded Christ's commission to him and his fellow-apostles. I notice this fact, because it shows how the primitive Christians, who could not have been mistaken, understood the commission.

the Mosaic dispensation is recorded, as has been noticed. Ex. xii. 48, 49. We have no reason to doubt but that the ancient church observed this part of the commission which Christ gave her by the hand of Moses. We know too, that many Gentiles became Jews, *i. e.* proselytes to the Jewish religion. See, for example, Est. viii. 17. But in all the history of the church, from Moses till Christ, we have not one recorded example of the circumcision of a Gentile and his household to illustrate or confirm the standing law. Need we think it strange, then, that in the very short history of the church, which is given in the New Testament (a period of little more than thirty years) so few instances are recorded of the admission of families to the church, from among the Gentiles, by baptism? Or can any humble disciple of Christ reasonably ask more evidence to convince him that the following inference is legitimately drawn from the former premises?

“Agreeably to the order originally established in the family of the father of the faithful, and uniformly observed by the church of God until Christ came, and in obedience to the commission given them by their risen Lord, it was the uniform practice of the apostles to admit believers and their families into the churches of Christ by baptism; or, in other words, to make them disciples by baptizing and teaching.”

Reader, ponder these things: compare them with the word of God, and with his distinguished kindness to the seed of the righteous under every former dispensation of his mercy; and having done so deliberately, and with prayer to God for the teaching of his holy Spirit, whether you have been a baptist or a pedobaptist, listen to the verdict of your own conscience, and henceforward walk humbly and peaceably according to its decision.

By no process of reasoning which I know can the facts referred to be made to harmonize with the principles or practice of the opposers of infant baptism. Their zeal for making proselytes exceeds that of almost all other denominations. As a distinct sect, their history may

be traced back to the *sixteenth century*. They are not more zealous in their exertions for proselyting than they are in publishing their success. But I question if their history will afford a single example of the apostolic practice of baptizing a believer and his or her family. What is the legitimate inference? Is it not clearly this? **THAT THE CHURCHES PLANTED BY THE APOSTLES, AND THE BAPTIST CHURCHES, ARE RADICALLY DIFFERENT IN THEIR CONSTITUTION.**

To conclude this article, our friends loudly demand of us precept or example for recognising our infant offspring as a constituent part of Christ's visible kingdom by baptism. We are quite ready to give both, although not of the kind they most unreasonably ask. We have Christ's explicit command to his apostles, and we have the apostles' explicit example in fulfilling the commission they received.

It might have been reasonably expected, that those who, with fearful boldness, cut off a constituent part of God's visible family on earth from that place which he granted them, at least from the days of Abraham, must have some very explicit precept or example to warrant the painful deed. We most reasonably and meekly request them to produce *one* such precept or precedent; and, if they shall, we will for ever yield the conflict. But they have none to produce. On the contrary, all the evidence of which the case will admit is decidedly against the practice. That the real thief is frequently loudest in exclaiming, "Stop thief," is true to a proverb.

These general remarks have been chiefly made for the purpose of illustrating Christ's commission to the apostles. I shall now proceed,—

5th, *To a more particular examination of the ground upon which the apostles proceeded in baptizing believers and their households.*

On the memorable day of Pentecost they commenced their work. Of this we have an interesting account, Acts ii. From this chapter I select, for my present purpose, the answer given by Peter to the anxious

query of the alarmed multitude, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" This question evidently sprung from an inward and painful conviction, that Jesus, whom they had lately crucified, is the Christ. The answer given by the apostle is, "Repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." This answer exactly corresponds with the apostle's commission. The commission is, Go, disciple all nations, baptizing and teaching; and his answer announced the good news, that the promise, which was covenanted to Abraham and his seed, was now to be extended to the Gentiles; but still it was to the Jews and their children first.

It is unnecessary to spend time in inquiring what particular promise is here referred to. We have already seen, that God's covenant with Abraham, to be a God to him and to his seed after him, virtually comprehends all the promises of God: hence it makes no difference to the argument, whether the apostle's words refer directly to the root or to any of its branches. In either case it is alike manifest, that in his answer the apostle explicitly announced the following fact, viz.—

THAT THE ORDER ESTABLISHED BY JEHOVAH IN HIS COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM AND HIS SEED AFTER HIM, AND UNIFORMLY REALIZED IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THAT COVENANT, UNDER THE OLD DISPENSATION, WAS TO BE CONTINUED UNDER THE NEW, AND PUBLISHED TO ALL NATIONS. See Gen. xvii. 4—14.

In proof and illustration of this, the reader's attention is requested to the following additional remarks:—(1.) The apostle's words must be understood in one of two senses, viz.—Either as an explicit intimation that the ancient order of the administration of the mercy promised to Abraham was to be continued, or an explicit intimation that it was now to be finally abrogated. In other words, that the infant seed of believers were still to be retained in the visible family of God, as federally holy, or that they were now to be cast out as un-

clean. If, as the baptists constantly affirm, the infants were to have no visible connexion with the gospel church, of necessity the painful fact must have been both announced and exemplified on the day of Pentecost; for as the keys of the kingdom of heaven were given to the apostles on that day, they opened its door for all who have a right to a place in it, and shut it for ever against all who have not. They, and they alone, had authority to retain or to repel the little ones. See Matt. xvi. 19.

(2.) The apostle's answer is in direct opposition to the *baptist system*, and in perfect harmony with the *doctrine and practice of infant baptism*. The apostle's object in telling his hearers, that the promise was unto them, and unto their children, manifestly was to persuade them with their children to become Christ's disciples by baptism: "Repent and be baptized;" "for the promise is unto you and to your children." On the supposition that the ancient order was now to be reversed, it was absolutely necessary that the apostle's hearers should have understood his answer to their question, as a direct and explicit intimation of the great and unexpected change. But, instead of this, it is not possible to conceive a more awkward way of announcing such a change, nor a more revolting argument to enforce the exhortation. And to make the apostle's answer tally with that scheme which cuts off the little ones from the place they had at that time in the kingdom of Heaven, it must be expounded and understood exactly according to the rule of reverse. For the sake of illustration, I shall attempt such an exposition; and let the reader try if he can bring his own mind seriously to believe the doctrine.

"Be baptized;" "for the promise is unto you and to your children." Yes; not only unto you, but also UNTO YOUR CHILDREN. In other words, the promise which hitherto was unto your children is now no more; for that covenant which God established with Abraham, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to him, and to his seed after him, in their generations; that covenant, I say, which Jehovah commanded for ever,

which he established to a THOUSAND GENERATIONS by the merciful mission of the Messiah, who came to confirm the promises made unto the fathers, has now happily terminated for ever with this the FORTY-SECOND GENERATION. Be ye therefore baptized ; and, for your encouragement, be assured, that, in the event of becoming the disciples of Jesus by baptism, you will thereby seal the exclusion of your children from the kingdom of God on earth, and your explicit renunciation of the interest which Jehovah graciously granted them in his covenant of mercy to your father Abraham and to his seed for ever. Be baptized, therefore, and you shall have the satisfaction to know, that, by the happy change, your beloved offspring shall henceforth be without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." Be baptized, therefore, for the promise is unto you and unto your children.

Let not the reader rashly conclude that the above exposition is overcharged. If he has examined, or will examine, the subject, he must see that it does not contain a single idea, nor exhibit a single sacrifice, but what is necessarily implied in the baptists' assumed termination of the Abrahamic covenant, and the exclusion of the infant seed of believers from Christian baptism and from the church of Christ. Every Christian parent who has been immersed, on baptists' principles, has made every sacrifice specified, although very many have done so in great ignorance. No Christian parent, who understands the subject in its various bearings on Jehovah's plan of revealed mercy, can become a baptist, until his mind is reconciled to renounce every ground of hope in the Bible in reference to his children ; for such renunciation (as shall be shewn in course) is explicitly sealed by immersion. I must again repeat the fact, that to make the apostle's argument accord with the avowed principles of the opposers of infant baptism, it must be expounded by the rule of reverse. For let it be remembered, that had the Saviour intended that the infant seed of his people should be cast out of his visible kingdom, the day of Pentecost was the time to

publish his will ; and the apostle must have announced it to the inquiring Jews in the plainest possible terms, when he exhorted them to be baptized in the name of Jesus.

I am not ignorant of the diverse schemes which the baptist advocates have invented to *get over* the passage under consideration. But I appeal to the common sense of the baptists themselves, if any thing short of the exposition given can be made to suit their system ? By the apostle's answer, as has already been said, he either meant to announce the termination or the perpetuity of the ancient grant to the children of God's people. If he meant to announce its termination, he used language than which no heathen oracle can be found more ambiguous ; but if he meant to proclaim its perpetuity, his language is so plain, that his hearers could not possibly have misunderstood his meaning.

The opposers of infant baptism endeavour to persuade people that this passage has nothing to do with the controversy. They have their reasons for this. But I trust the reader will now see, that whatever side of the question he may have espoused, the events of the day of Pentecost are deeply involved in the present discussion. To convince him of this has been the principal design of the preceding remarks.

I shall now proceed to shew, that the apostle's exhortation perfectly harmonizes with the ancient order established by Christ in his own house. Whatever blessings are comprehended in the promise, the apostle assured the assembled multitude, that, in some sense, these blessings belonged alike to them and to their children. This he urged as his most powerful argument to enforce his exhortation. In this he imitated the ancient prophets in exhorting the people, in the name of Christ, to obey the voice of the Lord their God. " But this thing I commanded them, saying, Obey my voice, and I WILL BE YOUR GOD, AND YE SHALL BE MY PEOPLE." Jer. vii. 23. Never did the Lord, in any age, call the sons of Adam to repentance on any other terms. In calling them to obey his voice, whether by the ministry of prophets or apostles, he en-

forced his call by nothing less than the promise of being their God and the God of their children. During the whole of the Old Testament dispensation this promise was constantly exhibited to the Jews and to their children, and constantly urged as the grand motive to excite them to yield that holy and spiritual obedience to all God's commandments which he had enjoined.* But while the apostle imitated the example of the ancient prophets in calling his kinsmen to repentance, the Spirit taught him to intimate, that the promise was now to be extended to the Gentiles and their children, wherever the gospel is preached; for this is undoubtedly the meaning of the latter clause, "All that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

The baptists, and some other commentators, limit the words, "As many as the Lord our God shall call," to such as are effectually called. But this limitation is unwarranted by the text, and irreconcilable with the following plain facts:—(1.) The apostle uses the terms—"The promise is unto you and your children," &c., in calling a promiscuous multitude of Jews to repentance, *to excite them to obey the call*. (2.) He assures them, while as yet in an unconverted state, that the promise was to them and their children; and that, too, before any one of them had obeyed the call. But, (3.) it is manifest some, nay, many, of those whom the apostle addressed *did not obey the call*. Hence the distinction marked (verse 41) between those who did and the multitude who did not obey. How then, it will be asked, could the apostle tell an unconverted multitude, that the promise was unto them and to their children? We reply, just as he elsewhere told them, in truth, when calling them to repentance, that they were the children of the COVENANT which God made with their father Abraham; chap. iii. 19—26: and just as another apostle affirms, truly, concerning a still greater multitude of unconverted Jews, that unto them pertained

* The reader may consult the following proofs: Deut. v. 6—21. Compared with Ex. xx. 1—7, Deut. vi. 4—15, and x. 12—21. Ps. lxxx. and xc. Hos. xiv.

the COVENANTS and the PROMISES. See Rom. ix. 3, 4. If the opposers of infant baptism *will not* see these things to be so, it cannot be helped; that *they are so* is self-evident.

I trust the reader is now convinced, that when the apostles laid the foundation on the day of Pentecost, they announced, in terms which it was impossible for their hearers to have misunderstood, that the connexion which God had established from the beginning, between believing parents and their seed, in the administration of his covenant mercy, was still to be continued under the gospel dispensation of that covenant; and this makes the argument for infant baptism direct and conclusive. The promise is to you, therefore, Be baptized. The promise is to your children, let them also be baptized. When God gave the promise to Abraham, he said to him, Be circumcised. And because the promise was unto his children, the Lord said, Let them, too, be circumcised. If the reader will compare the passage under consideration with Gen. xvii. 7—14, he will see that, with the exception of circumstantial things, the command in both cases is substantially the same.

That clause which respects the calling of the Gentiles will be further illustrated, by attending to the account we have of the way in which the apostles fulfilled their ministry among them. As Peter was selected to lay the foundation among the Jews, we find, from his own testimony, that God made choice of him to open the door of faith to the Gentiles also. See Acts xv. 7. An angel of God appeared to Cornelius, and said to him, Send men for Simon, whose surname is Peter, "Who shall tell thee words whereby thou and ALL THY HOUSE shall be saved." Acts xi. 14. In the language of inspiration, from first to last, a man's house or household means his family.* To tell Cornelius, therefore,

* In proof of the above, we notice the following specimen: Gen. vii. 1. "Come, thou and thy *house*," &c. Ex. xii. 30.—"There was not a *house* where there was not one dead," &c. Josh. xxiv. 15.—"Me and my *house*, we will serve the Lord."

words whereby he and all his *house* should be saved, was to tell him, that the covenant-promise was unto him and to his children. In similar language, Jesus declared the good news to Zaccheus: "This day is salvation come to this *HOUSE*." Reader, mark the reason assigned: FOR AS MUCH AS HE ALSO IS A SON OF ABRAHAM. Whatever Zaccheus was before, he was now a son of Abraham, and on him, according to the promise, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed." Whatever obscurity people may pretend to find in the term *house*, when used by Jesus and his apostles, it as clearly meant a man's family or children, as any that can be substituted in its place. Peter declared on the day of Pentecost, that the promise was to his adult hearers, and to their children; and that the same mercy was to be extended to as many of the Gentiles as God's call in the gospel should reach: "To all that are afar off, as many as the Lord our God shall call." And to the family of Cornelius he was now sent, to tell him words whereby he and all his house were to be saved. This, as has been observed, was to tell him, in other words, that, by God's call in the gospel, "the promise was unto him and to his children." When those who preach the gospel do not remind their adult hearers, that the promise is unto them and their *children*, they are so far unfaithful; and those who teach parents that the promise is *not* to their children, manifestly preach another gospel than that which Christ and his apostles preached.

In Acts x., we have an outline of what Peter preached to Cornelius and the company that were assembled with him. No express mention is made of children. But, unless it be taken for granted, that he was unfaithful in delivering his Lord's message, we may be sure, that he told Cornelius and his company, that the promise was "unto them and to their children." The truth is, he did so substantially, by telling them, that the middle wall of partition between the Jews and the Gentiles was now broken down. See verses 28. 34, 35. 43.

The spirit of God set his seal to Peter's doctrine. Peter instructed them to *bring water*, and commanded the whole company to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Verses 44—48. Thus the Gentiles were now "grafted into the good olive-tree;" or, in other words, visibly and ostensibly introduced into the kingdom of Christ by baptism. Is it credible, reader, that their little ones were shut out? Can such a supposition accord with the fact, that salvation was now come to the family of Cornelius, and to the family of every person present on the occasion? By no means; for the voice of sovereign mercy to every head of a family is substantially the same, under every dispensation of the everlasting covenant: COME, THOU AND ALL THY HOUSE, INTO THE ARK.

When the apostle Paul preached the gospel at Philippi he would tell his people the good news; that, by the call of God in the gospel, "the promise was unto them and unto their children." And accordingly we find, that when Lydia's heart was opened to attend to Paul's doctrine, she and her family were made disciples by baptism. To the anxious question of the jailer he gave the very same answer, for substance, that Peter gave to the trembling Jews on the day of Pentecost, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." And when he had gladly received the word, he was baptized, and all his straightway. These remarks have been made with the design of illustrating the apostle's argument. "For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, as many as the Lord our God shall call." And having such evidence, that Peter, the apostle of the Jews, and Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, have confirmed, both by word and deed, the explanation that has been given; in other words, that in preaching and baptizing, they have included the children with their parents; I feel assured that the doctrine is sufficiently attested. And, moreover, that neither the clause referred to, nor the language and the conduct of Jesus and his apostles, from first to last, in reference to believers and their children, will admit of any other con-

sistent explanation. As a further evidence of the truth of the doctrine, we find the Gentile children, the infants to be brought up, actually in the Gentile churches, and recognised by the apostle as constituent members of the household of faith. See Eph. vi. 1—4. Col. iii. 20, 21.

I trust the attentive reader will now see with his own eyes, that, instead of abrogating, Jesus and his apostles have explicitly and immutably confirmed the ancient privilege of the children of God's people. That Jesus found them legitimate members of his kingdom, when he came to confirm the promises made to the fathers, is admitted by the opposers of infant baptism. Instead of casting them out, we have seen that he laid his hands on them and blessed them, and pronounced them members of his kingdom. We have seen that the commission he gave to his apostles bound them to baptize the infants with their parents, and that it was impossible for them to have understood it in any other light. In fulfilling the ministry they had received of their Lord, we have seen that it was the uniform practice of the apostles to baptize believers and their families; and we have found the infants actually enjoying their former place in the gospel-churches, which were planted and watered by the apostles; and, finally, we have found that all this is in perfect harmony with all that prophets and apostles have testified concerning the glorious change which has been effected in the church of Christ by his manifestation in the flesh. Hence it follows of necessity,—

THAT, IN THE BIBLE, THERE CANNOT POSSIBLY BE FOUND ONE SINGLE TEXT, OR ONE SINGLE INSTITUTE, THAT DIRECTLY, OR BY LEGITIMATE INFERENCE, FORBIDS THE BAPTISM OF THE INFANT SEED OF BELIEVERS; AND THAT ALL THE ARGUMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN DEVISED AND URGED AGAINST THE PRACTICE, ARE ALIKE VOID OF TRUTH AND CHARITY.

Here, therefore, I might lay down the pen, confident, as I am, that the foundation which has been brought but very imperfectly to view can never be shaken.

But, for the sake of those whose minds have been perplexed and entangled by the reasonings of their baptist neighbours, and in order to expose some of the errors of that system, it will be expedient to examine some other facts which are involved in the controversy. One of the most important of these facts may be thus stated :—

Circumcision is now abolished, and baptism substituted in its stead in the church of God :—and as believers and their families were anciently initiated into the church by circumcision, they must now be introduced by baptism.

We have already seen that this was the case at the original institution of both circumcision and baptism; and likewise on every subsequent occasion, in which the head of a family was converted. At the original institution of circumcision, by the command of God, Abraham and all the male members of his family were circumcised ;—when baptism was instituted, by the appointment of the same Lord, with the believing head of the family, all his were straightway baptized. Afterward the infant seed of believing Jews or Gentiles were duly recognised as members of the household of faith, by the application of the initiating sign, as is done at this day.

As the baptists find it necessary to dispute the fact, that baptism has come in the room of circumcision, a few remarks will be necessary to confirm this part of the truth. I observe, therefore,

First, That baptism is expressly called the circumcision of Christ, or, in other words, the Christian circumcision :—“ And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power ; in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ ; buried with him in baptism,” &c. Col. ii. 10, 11, 12. In order to understand the doctrine taught in this text, it will be necessary to keep in memory the circumstances of the Gentile churches at the period in which it was written. We have seen,

that when few or many of the Gentiles believed, they and their children were introduced to the visible family of God by baptism. For some time they enjoyed great happiness in the fellowship of the gospel. See Gal. iv. 13, 14, 15. But the Judaizing teachers, like our zealous baptists, embraced every opportunity of persuading them to be circumcised. They taught them, either directly or indirectly, that, except they were circumcised, they could not be saved. The leaven thus infused could not fail to operate on the minds of young converts, whose attention had never been directed to the subject before. When they first heard and believed the gospel, they were filled with joy and peace in believing;—and, in the simplicity of their hearts, they wished to observe all God's commandments. Hence by the doctrine of the Judaizers their minds were unsettled. They were taught to believe that they had hitherto been living in the neglect of a commanded duty; and thus they were in great danger of falling into the snare so artfully laid for them. The manifest design of the apostle, in the passage under consideration, is, to counteract the doctrine of the false teachers. With this view, he assures the believers that, in Christ their head, they were already complete, without that circumcision so zealously urged upon them: they were partakers of the circumcision made without hands; that is, the circumcision of the heart; or, in other words, regeneration, and of what was now the divinely-instituted sign of regeneration, namely, baptism. The apostle tells them in language which they could not have misunderstood, that they had the sign and the thing signified; and were complete, in this respect, without the ancient circumcision.

To convince the reader that the above is the fair meaning of the text, it is only necessary to attend to the three following questions which arise out of it: (1.) In what sense could the Gentile believers be said to have been complete in Christ without the ancient circumcision? The answer furnished by the text is,—“In whom ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins

of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; buried with him in baptism," &c. (2.) What is the circumcision which is made without hands? The answer is, the circumcision of the heart, or the washing of regeneration. (3.) What is the circumcision of Christ? (or the Christian circumcision.) The answer furnished by the text is,—Buried with him in baptism, &c. Compare Rom. vi. 3—6. If any shall object to the above exposition of the passage, let them try if they can invent any other that will either accord with the language, or the design of the apostle, and they will soon find it an impossible task. I remark,

In the second place, That as baptism is called the Christian circumcision, it answers the same purpose, in the church of God under the gospel, that circumcision answered under the Abrahamic and the Mosaic dispensations of the everlasting covenant. The proposed illustration of this proposition will discover that there is a momentous difference between us and the opposers of infant baptism,—a difference which, for their sake, I would willingly hide, if the cause of truth did not require an exposure.

While circumcision and baptism answer the same great general purposes in the church of God, it is by no means necessary or possible that they should agree in every minute circumstance. The apostle Peter informs us, that the admission of Noah and his family into the ark, answers to the admission of believers and their family into the church by baptism, (see 1 Peter iii. 21.) and the apostle Paul teaches us that the Lord's Supper succeeds the Passover, (see 1 Cor. v. 7, 8.) though in many respects there is a great difference. Keeping these facts in view, let us shortly glance at the following points of resemblance between the two institutions:—

1st, *Circumcision and baptism point directly to the blood of Christ.* When the baptists can make it accord with their system, they will allow that circumcision pointed to the cutting off of the Messiah; but, on other occasions, they represent circumcision as pointing exclusively to temporal things. I am sorry for this,

but cannot help it. When the author of circumcision pronounces it the token of his everlasting covenant, and then the apostle assures me that it was the divinely-appointed seal of the righteousness of faith, I feel bound to believe that it was intended to point the circumcised directly to him, who is JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, and to that blood whereby we are justified. That baptism answers the same end is not denied. In this first point of resemblance there is only this circumstantial difference; circumcision directed the faith of the circumcised to the Messiah to be cut off for the sins of his people; baptism signifies and seals the glorious truth, that Christ has actually shed his blood for the remission of sin.

2d, *Circumcision and baptism significantly proclaim man's guilt and depravity by nature, and the necessity of salvation by the washing of regeneration.* That such was the design of our circumcision is sufficiently manifest by the language of its author in reference to it: "He is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart," &c. Romans ii. 28, 29. "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart," &c. Deut. x. 16. "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskin of your heart," &c. Jer. iv. 4. "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart," &c. Acts vii. 51. "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed," &c. Deut. xxx. 6. "We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit," &c. Phil. iii. 3. Thus circumcision was evidently intended to direct the circumcised to God's gracious promise and to their acknowledged duty.

Our baptist friends maintain, that, instead of harmony in this article, there is as great a difference between the design of these two institutes as there is between the sign and the thing signified. Instead of admitting the fact, that baptism, like its predecessor, is intended to point out and enforce the necessity of regeneration, they stoutly maintain, that it signifies and seals the ac-

tual regeneration of the baptized, their actual fellowship with Christ, and their actual participation of the blessings of salvation. In proof of this, they tell us, most truly, that the circumcised were called to circumcise their heart; but they affirm, most untruly, that the baptized are never called to baptize (*i. e.* to change) their heart. That this is a great and very pernicious error will, perhaps, appear by the following facts:—

(1.) God never instituted any external ordinance in his visible kingdom on earth, with the design of sealing or signifying the actual personal regeneration, or holiness, of the members of his visible church. All that external ordinances are intended to do, or to seal and signify, is his eternal truth; and that his professed people ought to be and to do. The sealing of their personal holiness, &c. is the work of the Holy Spirit, and is never intrusted to erring mortals. Let those who teach the opposite doctrine try if they can point out a single example among all the external ordinances which God has appointed in his church from beginning to end. (2.) If baptism were intended to signify or seal what the baptists affirm, we are sure that, when applied under the eye of the apostles themselves, it was frequently the sign of an untruth. Simon the sorcerer was not the only person who was baptized, who gave evidence that he had neither part nor lot in the blessings of salvation. See Acts viii. 9—23. Did Simon's baptism signify or seal his actual fellowship with Christ? &c. (3.) What was anciently enjoined on the circumcised is substantially and very powerfully urged on the baptized. If the former were exhorted to circumcise their heart, the latter are exhorted to cleanse their heart, to be renewed in the spirit of their mind,—to put off the old man,—to crucify the flesh,—to cleanse themselves from all filthiness, &c.; and the ancient promise to Abraham and his seed after him is urged to enforce the duty enjoined. See James iv. 8. Eph. iv. 22, 23, 24. 2 Cor. vii. 1. I wish some of those who see it would try to shew me wherein consists the mighty difference between circumcising the foreskin of the heart, under the law, and changing the heart, &c. under the gospel. No wonder

that those who can see it discover a corresponding difference between the design of circumcision and that of baptism ; but I trust the attentive reader now sees that, in both cases, the difference is purely imaginary.

3d, *Circumcision and baptism were divinely-instituted signs of initiation into the visible kingdom of God.* That circumcision initiated the infant seed of Abraham into the ancient church is admitted by the baptists. Nor do they deny that baptism was appointed to initiate qualified subjects into the gospel church : “ Circumcision” (say they) “ initiated the *carnal seed* into the *carnal church* ; baptism gives the *spiritual seed* an entrance to the *true church*,” &c. The unity of the church under both dispensations has already been proved ; the above quotation is here introduced merely to shew that, in regard to this point of resemblance, between circumcision and baptism, we and our friends are happily agreed. And this one acknowledged point of agreement goes pretty far to prove that baptism now occupies the place of the ancient circumcision in the church of God. When I find B., door-keeper in the church of which my well-known old friend, C., now deceased, long kept the door, although I see a difference between the two men, I never think of questioning the fact, that B. is now C.’s successor in office.

4th, *Circumcision and baptism were divinely-instituted tokens of obligation to believe and obey whatsoever Christ hath commanded.* That circumcision was such in its day, is explicitly taught by the apostle, and in various other parts of Scripture : “ I testify against every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.” (See and compare Gal. v. 1—3, with Acts xv. 10.) That baptism is such is manifest from the apostolic commission, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. Disciple all nations ; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; teaching them to observe all things. Our friends will acknowledge this point of resemblance too, between the design of the two institutes, with this difference, that while circumcision, very properly, made unconscious infants debtors to obey Christ under the law, it is both incon-

sistent and impossible to make unconscious infants debtors to obey Christ under the gospel. I wish some of them would explain to me the nature of this assumed impossibility. Is it natural or moral, or in what does it consist? As I have never been able to see the difference, I must still believe that it is as possible, and as consistent, with every principle in the Bible, to make infants debtors under the gospel as it was under any former dispensation of God's everlasting covenant.

5th, *Circumcision and baptism were divinely appointed to distinguish the professed people of God, among whom he had established his covenant, or to whom he had delivered the faith, from the rest of mankind.* Compare Gen. xvii. 4—14, with Ps. lxxvii. 1—7; Rom. iii. 1—3; Jude 3. This point of resemblance between the two institutes is likewise acknowledged occasionally by the baptists, with this assumed and momentous difference, that whereas the gospel requires true holiness and spiritual worship, no such thing was necessary under the former dispensation. “If” (says one of the advocates of the system) “their conduct was openly immoral in many important points, provided they had obeyed the Levitical requirements, they had a right to come with their offerings, and to share in all the privileges of the dispensation.” As it is admitted, on all hands, that both institutes were appointed signs of church membership, this article might be dismissed without further illustration; but the doctrine of the above quotation (which necessarily arises out of the baptists’ view of the Old Testament church) demands attention. Were the thing lawful, I should have no objections to rest the entire merits of the controversy on the truth or falsehood of the doctrine. The quotation explicitly teaches, that immoral Jews had a right both to come with their offerings, and to share in all the privileges of that covenant of which circumcision is the divinely-instituted seal and token; and, to my certain knowledge, this doctrine is most zealously enforced by the baptists in those simple-hearted believers whom they mark out for their prey. But the question is, Who gave immoral Jews any such right? Let the reader

be entreated to examine his Bible, and whether he be baptist or pedobaptist he *must* see that the doctrine is in direct opposition to the whole scope and design of the Old Testament, and to some of the most pointed declarations of the God of heaven. For example, "Unto the wicked" (*i. e.* the immoral Jew) "God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?" &c. Ps. l. 16, 17. The baptists maintain, the wicked Jew had an undoubted right, which could not be forfeited by immorality of conduct. "If their conduct was openly immoral in many important points, provided they had obeyed the Levitical requirements, they could not be excluded." "They had a right both to come with their offerings, and to share in all the blessings of the dispensation." Hear, again, what the author of the dispensation says to the immoral Jews. To every Jew whose conduct was secretly or openly immoral, Jehovah thus spake:—"Bring no more vain oblations: incense is an abomination unto me; the new-moons and the sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with: it is iniquity," &c. &c. Is. 10—15. Bring them, by all means, say our baptist advocates,— "Though your conduct be openly immoral, you have a right both to come with your 'vain oblations,' and to share in all the privileges of the dispensation;" nay, "provided you have observed the Levitical requirements, you cannot be excluded."

The author from whom these quotations are taken, further maintains, that all the immoral Jews were in covenant with God, and that nothing could exclude them from the general privileges of the Abrahamic family. Although the generality of his brethren, who have written on the subject, are more cautious in their words, they hold the same views with him of God's ancient church. In this country, their disciples teach the doctrine with remarkable zeal, industry, and perseverance; and those of us who will not embrace it are esteemed, to say the least, bigoted opposers of the cause of God. But what can we do? If we believe the baptists when they tell us that wicked Jews were accept-

able worshippers, and had a right to all the privileges of God's covenant, how can we believe God when he tells us that their oblations were an abomination to him, and that they had no right to take his covenant in their mouth?

We have thus seen, that baptism is pronounced by the apostle the Christian circumcision; and that in all the essential uses for which circumcision and baptism were divinely instituted, there is a perfect harmony. Christ is the author of both institutes. He abrogated circumcision, and substituted baptism in its place. For obvious reasons, the opposers of infant baptism wish to dispute the glaring fact, that baptism now holds the place of circumcision in the church of God. Let the reader examine the articles which have been stated, in which there is a perfect harmony in the two ordinances, and, making allowance for those circumstantial differences which become necessary by the change of the two dispensations, let him try if he can say, as in the presence of God, that he is not yet convinced of the fact, that baptism has been instituted in the room of circumcision. Should he attempt to make such a solemn appeal, I call upon him to try if he can point out any other ordinance in God's visible kingdom that can be made, by any conceivable process, to answer the design of circumcision. There must, for example, be some visible sign of admission to Christ's visible kingdom; but if baptism is not allowed to be that sign, there never was nor will be another of divine authority.

Having now vindicated the divine right of the infant seed of believers to their ancient place in the church of God upon earth, and to baptism, which is the appointed sign of initiation, it remains to examine more minutely

THE PRINCIPAL OBJECTIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN
URGED AGAINST THE DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE OF IN-
FANT BAPTISM.

The attentive reader must have seen, that the most plausible objections have already been anticipated; and

that if the doctrine which has been stated in the preceding pages be sufficiently attested by the Scriptures, it must be impossible, in the nature of things, to find one single valid objection in the Bible to the baptism of the infant seed of believers ; but, for reasons which will be obvious in the sequel, it seems proper to notice the following, which have a tendency to perplex the minds of young believers :—

I. Our appeal to the Old Testament Scriptures is loudly reprobated in various forms, of which the following is a specimen. A very zealous declaimer against infant baptism takes for his text, “ *WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE ?*” Gal. iv. 30. Had the preacher told his hearers but a part of the truth, they would have seen the gross absurdity of the application of the text to his subject. Had he honestly told them the whole truth, they must have seen that the text goes directly to overturn his system. But, instead of doing either, the first thing he does is to lay a solemn interdict on that very Scripture to which his text is a direct and a formal appeal. “ *The New Testament*” (says our preacher) “ *must be the only rule by which we are to proceed on the subject.*”—“ *We have in this case nothing to do with the Old Testament.*” “ *Consequently to this part of the inspired volume we must make our appeal ;— ‘ What saith the Scripture ?’*” If the reader will turn to the epistle whence the preacher took his text, he will find that the Scripture to which the text directs is the book of Genesis ; and he will further see, that to that book the apostle appeals in proof of the most essential truths in question between us and the baptists ; in other words, he will find, that, from the very book to which the text directly refers, the inspired writer proves the perpetuity of the Abrahamic covenant, the spiritual nature of its blessings, and the interest which believing Gentiles now have in its precious promises. See Gal. iii. 6—29.

It was no doubt very clever in the preacher to silence the Scripture to which his text directed him and his hearers at the very outset ; for he then found him-

self at liberty to quote his text, which he accordingly did, under almost every particular, to sanction all the hard things he says against infant baptism. But seriously, reader, can such perversion of the Scriptures be too strongly reprobated? Can a system which requires the aid of such artifice be of God?

Another opposer of infant baptism, who had long felt it difficult to *get over* the Abrahamic covenant, concludes a long libel against our appeal to the Old Testament Scriptures in these words:—"The whole system of antichristian worship is founded on the Jewish law." If this be really the case, the Jewish law is a thousand fold worse than Mahomet's Alcoran. What are the distinguishing peculiarities of antichristian worship? I answer, *The sacrifice of the mass,—the worshipping of angels, and real or imaginary saints, images, and relics, prayers for the souls in purgatory, &c. &c.* I trust the reader knows that he will look in vain to the Jewish law for any shade of countenance to such abominations. But many a simple soul has been misled by the book from which the above assertion is quoted.

A more moderate, but not less determined opposer of infant baptism, thus writes:—"We cannot understand the propriety of looking to the book of Genesis for direction as to a New Testament ordinance; nor can we feel the force of arguments drawn from the Abrahamic covenant and circumcision." We know you cannot, and we see the cause. So long as men are determined to hold fast a system which compels its ablest advocates to maintain, in opposition to some of the plainest texts in the Bible, that the Abrahamic covenant is abrogated,—that its blessings were carnal and temporal,—that immoral Jews were acceptable worshippers,—that circumcision was a sign and seal of carnal things, &c. &c.,—it is impossible for them to see the propriety or feel the force of the most conclusive arguments which can be presented to them, either from the Old or New Testament. But this only shews the humiliating fact, that the prejudices of custom are sufficient to blind the minds of good men to those truths which are in their own nature sufficiently plain. But

when we are sure that we have the example of Jesus and his apostles to guide us in this matter, we feel persuaded that the ground is firm. The apostle Paul, for example, takes us by the hand, and leads us to the book of Genesis, that we may see, with our own eyes, the immutability of the Abrahamic covenant, and the exhaustless treasures of everlasting mercy contained in that great promise to which the sign of circumcision was annexed. He assures us that the gospel, which is now preached to us sinners of the Gentiles, is substantially that which was originally preached to Abraham; that, by confirming the immutability of his covenant to Abraham, Jehovah intended to give strong consolation to believers in Christ under the gospel; that believing Jews and Gentiles are alike the children of God, and heirs according to the promise; and that, in one word, all the promises of God (whether in the Old Testament or the New), as ministered by the apostles, are in Christ, yea, and in him, Amen.

Although these and many more glorious truths are proved by the apostles from the book of Genesis, our baptist friends will not allow it to have any connexion with a New Testament ordinance;—such is the unhappy influence which system has in blinding the mind.

Before dismissing this article, it will be proper to notice a sophism contained in the objection last quoted. The worthy author insinuates, that the advocates of infant baptism “go to the book of Genesis for direction as to a New Testament ordinance.” This is not a fair statement of the case. They only compare the apostle’s exposition of the Abrahamic covenant with what is recorded in the book of Genesis, in proof of the interesting fact, that God graciously granted to the infant seed of his people an interest in his everlasting covenant; and they go to the New Testament for proof that the gracious grant has never been retracted.

But why do the opposers of infant baptism make such a clamour against us for appealing to the Old Testament Scriptures? I know well, that many of those who have ignorantly embraced the system are not able

to answer the question, and that their ablest advocates are not willing to give it an explicit answer. They tell us, to be sure, that they cannot see the propriety of the practice,—but that is only an evasion of the question. The real reason is a conviction that, when the Old Testament is allowed to speak, it is unfavourable to the baptist system. And what are the consequences of this?—I feel pained in being obliged to reply,—Very great ignorance, or wilful misrepresentation of the Old Testament church and many passages of Old Testament Scripture. Many of those who have renounced infant baptism manifest a lamentable ignorance of the nature and the design of the Old Testament church, and pay no proper respect for a good deal of the Old Testament Scriptures. Hence the abusive epithets which are poured on God's ancient church and ordinances by mere novices, who have never considered the subject but as they have been taught by their leaders; and to them a great part of the Old Testament is perfectly useless. Now, either this is the case with their teachers, from whom they have learned, or they are guilty of wilfully perverting the matter. In proof of this assertion, I appeal to the quotations which have already been made from some of their most celebrated publications, to which many more of the same kind might be added. We have seen, for example, one of their admired advocates affirming, in the plainest terms, that wicked Jews had a right to bring their sacrifices, and to all the privileges of the Abrahamic family. Either this author did, or he did not know, that, under that dispensation, God said to all the Jews, *Be ye holy, for I am holy*; and to every immoral Jew he said, *Bring no more vain oblations, &c. &c.—What hast thou to do to take my covenant in thy mouth?*—If our author knew these things, I leave the reader to say, Whether or not he is guilty of wilfully perverting the Old Testament dispensation? Be this as it may, he will now be able to estimate the propriety and the strength of this first and prominent objection; and it may assist him to form a proper judgment of the importance of this part of the subject to keep in memory the following fact:—In

Christ's sermons, and in the preaching and inspired writings of his apostles, they uniformly appeal to the Old Testament Scriptures in general, and to those which treat of the Abrahamic covenant in particular,—its promises, precepts, duties, &c. &c. But, when the opposers of infant baptism preach or write on the subject, they endeavour to silence Moses and all the prophets, and quiet their own conscience by exclaiming,—“ We cannot feel the force of arguments drawn from the Abrahamic covenant and circumcision.”—“ The whole system of antichristian worship is founded on the Jewish law.’—“ The New Testament must be the only rule by which we are to proceed on the subject,” &c. &c.

II. It is objected, that we have no explicit precept or example for baptizing infants,—and therefore the practice is unlawful. This objection has been already answered. Whatever men, whose minds are blinded by system, may see in the commission to the apostles, we have seen that in it the apostles themselves must have seen an explicit command to baptize infants; and we have received sufficient proof that they understood it so as to act by its authority in baptizing believers and their families, both male and female. The examples incidentally recorded are more than sufficient to prove, that family baptism was the uniform practice of the apostles in executing their commission, since they assure us that they ordained and practised the same things every where, and in all the churches. Besides, (as has been already noticed,) we have found the children to be brought up along with their parents in the churches planted by the apostles, and pronounced *in the Lord*. Now, this proves their previous baptism beyond a doubt; for there is no admission for young or old into the churches of Christ but by baptism. But it may be further remarked,—

The will of the Lord may be as certainly known by legitimate inference as by the plainest precept that ever existed; and we have apostolic example for learning by inference what the will of God is. In the

Old Testament Scriptures the conversion of the Gentiles was foretold. The Jews would pay no respect to the command the apostles received from Jesus to preach the Gospel to every creature; in dealing with them, therefore, they prove by inference that it was the will of God that the Gospel should be preached to the Gentiles; and we hear of no objections made, even by the Jews, to this mode of proving what the will of the Lord is. The reader may consult the following examples of what we here refer to:—Acts xiii. 46, 47; and xv. 13—17. Rom. x. 13—20.

Moreover, it is a certain fact, that, on the subject of baptism, all the distinguishing peculiarities of the opposers of infant baptism are exclusively built on inference. We have seen that it is by inference exclusively, and that too the most erroneous, that they cut off their infant offspring from the visible kingdom of God. And where is their precept or example for baptizing adults whose parents are Christians from their birth?—Where is their precept or example for re-baptizing believers, who have for years professed the faith of the Gospel, and enjoyed its fellowship and ordinances before?—Where is their precept or example for immersing their converts with their clothes on? or for immersing them at all?—These are the distinguishing peculiarities of the party, for the promoting of which they are so zealous; but, instead of having precept or precedent to warrant their conduct, when the plain truth is told, they are really acting in opposition to the precepts and examples which stand recorded in the Old and the New Testaments. I challenge them to produce from the Old or the New Testament a single explicit precept or precedent to warrant their theory of baptism; and, if they produce me but *one*, I will engage to be one of their disciples.

III. It is objected, that it is absurd to apply a spiritual ordinance to an unconscious infant; and that since infants cannot repent nor believe, they must not be baptized. Certain declaimers against infant baptism have told us that we might as soon baptize a madman,

or even the beasts that perish, as an unconscious infant. By others the practice has been called a forgery on the God of heaven, and put on a level with the popish practice of baptizing bells. We sincerely pity those who can thus blaspheme what we know assuredly to be Christ's institution. My present business is to bring the objection to the test of truth; and in doing so, it is reasonable to apply it to the ancient ordinance of circumcision. If it be absurd to baptize unconscious infants under the Gospel, it must have been equally absurd to have circumcised unconscious infants under the law; but such was the appointment of the only wise God. Having already shewn that baptism is the substitute of circumcision, I will now add, that both institutes are alike carnal and spiritual. My baptist friends will be shocked at the profaneness of the doctrine; but such is the fact, and I cannot help it. The baptism instituted by Christ is just as carnal as was the circumcision instituted by Christ in the family of Abraham. Both are applied to the flesh. Both have a literal and a spiritual meaning. The literal meaning of circumcision is the cutting off the foreskin of the flesh; its spiritual meaning is the circumcision of the heart, or regeneration. See Rom. ii. 28, 29. Phil. iii. 3. The literal meaning of baptism is the application of pure water directly to the flesh of the baptized; the spiritual meaning of baptism is the renewing of the heart, or regeneration. See John iii. 5. Tit. iii. 5—7. I humbly request any of my baptist friends to tell me plainly, "without equivocation or mental reservation," which of the two institutes is most carnal? and which is most spiritual? That their plan of baptizing is by far the most carnal of the two I hope to prove in the proper place. In the mean time, I conjure them to tell me which of the two ordinances, as instituted by Christ, is the most carnal? or wherein consists the mighty difference? Is the water of any river or pool they can select one whit more spiritual than the blood of circumcision with which the circumcised was anciently *sprinkled*? Or did the immutably holy Author of both institutes confer a degree of spirituality on the one which he withheld from the

other? Let not the reader imagine that the above questions are vain or captious. On the contrary, they bear directly on the question at issue, and enter deeply into an essential part of the controversy, which has not yet received that attention which it merits. The baptists maintain, that there is as great a difference between the nature and the design of the two institutes as there is between things temporal and things that are spiritual and eternal; and on this imaginary difference they found their most plausible and perplexing objections against infant baptism. But some of the plainest passages in the Bible stand in BATTLE-ARRAY against their theory. I wish, if possible, to make my reader see this with his own eyes; and in order that he may do so, I request him to listen to the answer with which he is furnished to the following questions:—*First*, By the Bible: *Secondly*, By the baptists' publications. *Question 1st*, What is circumcision? BIBLE ANSWER. The token of God's covenant, which was established with Abraham and his seed after him, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto him and his seed after him. He (Abraham) received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had. Gen. xvii. 7—13. Rom. iv. 11. BAPTIST ANSWER. "Circumcision had a political aspect, being a sign of carnal descent, a mark of national distinction, and a token of interest in those temporal blessings that were promised to Abraham."

Question 2d, What advantage then hath the Jew, or what profit is thereof circumcision? BIBLE ANSWER. "Much every way, chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." BAPTIST ANSWER. "Circumcision signified certain temporal blessings which were thus as by promise secured to the Jews."

Question 3d, Did circumcision profit immoral, *i. e.* wicked Jews? Or did they break God's covenant and forfeit its blessings?

BIBLE ANSWER. "Circumcision surely profiteth if thou keep the law; but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision." Unto

the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?

BAPTIST ANSWER. "From this time, (viz. the time of their circumcision,) whatever might be their character or conduct, they were in covenant with God." "Nothing excluded them from the general privileges of the Abrahamic family." "His own conduct might be wicked, and his whole character base, yet he had as legal a claim to the sign of the covenant for his sons as the best man that lived."

Question 4th, Did God intend that circumcision and the spiritual blessings to which it referred should be confined to the fleshly seed of Abraham?

BIBLE ANSWER. "And Abraham took Ishmael, his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskins, as God had said unto him." He received the sign of circumcision, "that he might be the father of all them that believe."* See also Ex. xii. 48, 49, compared with Is. lvi. 3—7.

BAPTIST ANSWER. "Its great character was *national*." "Circumcision was a sign that God had established a covenant with Abraham, and with his seed after him, to make them a great *nation*; to be their God in a *national* capacity; to give them the land of Canaan; to secure it to them as *theirs* by *right*." "Circumcision," "a sign of carnal descent, a mark of national distinction, &c." N. B. "Servants, although circumcised, did not possess the privileges of the children of Abraham, nor were looked upon as the people of God."

Question 5th, Did the circumcising of those who were not the fleshly seed of Abraham, (as instituted and approved by God,) imply, on the part of the adult

* The apostle's words, above quoted, decidedly prove that it was in the character of the spiritual father of his numerous servants that Abraham circumcised the men of his household. This confirms the view given already of the church of God, as planted in the family of Abraham. See Rom. iv. 11—17. Gen. xvii. 4—14.

males, a previous knowledge of the God of Abraham, and a present possession of faith and obedience?

BIBLE ANSWER. "When a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and WILL KEEP THE PASSOVER TO THE LORD, let all his males be circumcised. One law shall be to him that is home-born, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you." "And the sons of the strangers that *join themselves to the Lord* to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, AND TAKETH HOLD OF MY COVENANT; even them will I bring to my holy mountain, &c. See Ex. xii. 48, 49. Is. lvi. 6.

BAPTIST ANSWER. "It did not signify whether they (*i. e.* the servants and strangers) believed in the God of Abraham or not; they might be heathens both in their hearts and in their profession; they might remonstrate and say, they neither feared, nor loved, nor worshipped the God of the Israelites; they were believers in another God, the God of *their* fathers, and they would not change their religion. All this might be true, but in their situation the law was *imperative*, and they must submit to be circumcised. They were their master's property, and this mark might be put upon them as well as any other."

The above catechetical exercise bears directly on the important question at issue between the baptists and the pedobaptists. The answers are given in the express words of God, and in the express words of the opposers of infant baptism. I request my readers to make themselves familiar with these answers; and having done so, let them judge whether or not a system which renders it necessary for its ablest advocates so flatly to contradict the Bible in its defence can be of God? In the mean time I would observe, that every argument which the baptists have yet urged against the baptism of unconscious infants, bears with equal force, (that is, with no force at all,) on the circumcision of unconscious infants. And all the hard things which are so liberally dealt out to those who conscientiously

practise infant baptism, will be found, in reality, to fall on the author of circumcision; for I solemnly put it to the consciences of the opposers of infant baptism, if they can advance a single objection against the practice they condemn, that will not equally apply to infant circumcision?

IV. It is objected, that infant baptism is of no practical use. “Every ordinance of Christ,” (says an eminent opposer of infant baptism,) “is practical.” “I can say for myself, that long as I held infant baptism, I could make no use of it whatever.”

If it shall be proved that infant baptism is of no practical use, this, in my view, is sufficient to decide the question at issue. That thing which is of no practical use in the churches of Christ cannot be of God. Let us bring the objection to the test, by comparing INFANT BAPTISM with ADULT IMMERSION.

When infant baptism or adult immersion is practised in the church, the deed has an aspect toward all the parties who take part in, or have an opportunity of witnessing what is done. For the sake of order, I begin my remarks on the practical use of *infant baptism* to the *believing parent*. On such an occasion, the mind of the believing parent, while devoting his infant to God by baptism, will be, or at least should be, deeply impressed with the following things to which the ordinance directly points. The humiliating truth, never to be forgotten, that his infant, like himself, “was conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity;” and that it needs “salvation by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the holy Spirit.” Under the painful impression connected with such conviction, his mind is both supported and comforted by reflecting on other important truths exhibited to his view by baptism; such as, That there is a fountain open for sin and uncleanness; that the blood of Jesus Christ is able to cleanse him and his seed from all sin; that the mercy proclaimed in God’s holy covenant is from everlasting to everlasting unto them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children’s children, to such as keep his

covenant, and to those who remember his commandments to do them; and this mercy is alike free, alike suited, and alike exhibited to him and his seed after him. From the faithful promises of God's everlasting covenant, he draws all his encouragement to pray for his child, and all his hopes too in the prospect of its living or dying.

Although no formal vows be imposed on parent or child at baptism, the believing parent will be put in mind of the obligations implied in the everlasting covenant; and, by its mercies, he feels constrained anew to devote himself and his to God. In such a frame of mind he must adopt the ancient resolution, **AS FOR ME AND MY HOUSE WE WILL SERVE THE LORD.**

Such is a specimen of the practical use of infant baptism to the believing parent; I shall now proceed to shew, that it is designed by its Author to be of good practical use to the yet *unconscious child*.

We have seen that the baptists assert, in opposition to some of the plainest facts in the Bible, that the practical use of circumcision to the infant seed of Abraham was to signify and seal their right to the earthly Canaan; and that, since we have no such inheritance to signify nor seal to our infants, their baptism is of no practical use. I must take the liberty of saying, that neither circumcision nor baptism was ever intended to seal a *temporal* or a *spiritual* inheritance to infants or adults, **AS THEIRS.** If any baptist will bring me a proof that God intended that circumcision should be *to any* of Abraham's seed, spiritual or temporal, a seal that an inheritance in the earthly Canaan was **THEIRS**, he will do what none of them has yet done. What then did the Lord intend to seal both by circumcision and baptism to all the parties concerned? I reply in one word, **THE IMMUTABILITY OF HIS OWN COUNSEL OR COVENANT.** Hence, although many who receive the seal of the covenant come short of the inheritance proposed by reason of their unbelief, the covenant stood immutably firm. Their unbelief did not make the faith of God of none effect. So it is still, "if we deny

him, he also will deny us; if we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself."

When infants are baptized, on proper principles, their baptism answers the same great ends which the circumcision of infants answered. Their interest in the everlasting covenant, and their connexion with the household of faith, are publicly recognised. They are solemnly set apart for God, entered into the school of Christ, to be *brought up* in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Their baptism is a public acknowledgment of their claim to an interest in the prayers, and the watchful care, not only of their parents, but also of the church into which they are thus visibly initiated; and to enjoy all the means of grace of which they are capable, until they shall, either by grace embrace the promises, as did Isaac and Jacob, or, like Ishmael and Esau, forfeit their privilege, by open and avowed unbelief. In short, baptized infants are thus entered into the household of faith to be taught, as they grow up, all things whatsoever Christ hath commanded; and their baptism is a pledge that they shall be so instructed. That many churches, as well as families, do not redeem the pledge, is a soul-humbling truth, and the consequences are what might have been anticipated; but this is not to be ascribed to the ordinance any more than the same unfaithfulness could be justly ascribed to the ordinance of circumcision. Such was the design, and such the practical use of circumcision, as originally instituted by the God of Abraham; and such is the design and practical use of baptism, as instituted by Christ. I cheerfully allow, that, in the first instance, the Author of infant baptism has consulted the good of believing parents. To them the ordinance is chiefly beneficial, while their children are in infancy; but surely this is a very curious reason for disputing or rejecting the precious privilege. I shall only add, that, in the above view of the practical use of baptism, nothing will be found but what is quite practicable,—nor any thing to militate against that purity which it is the duty and the interest of every church and of every individual to cultivate.

I proceed to notice the practical use of infant baptism to *the church* into which the infants are baptized. If churches or individuals who practise infant baptism do not reap advantage by it, they do well to examine what is the cause. That the institution is calculated to be of great practical use to them many know by comfortable experience. Infant baptism is no unmeaning ceremony. It exhibits to every living member of the church the great articles of the faith once delivered to the saints. By simple but significant signs, it reminds them of the kindness and love of God to man; and these signs are calculated to remind them of their precious privileges and important duties, as parents and children, masters and servants. Parents are reminded of God's kindness to them, and their need to cleave to the Lord, to hold fast his holy covenant; and, by all the means which he hath appointed, to commend it to their children. To animate their exertions and their prayers in behalf of their offspring, the ancient promise is brought to view; and to quell their rising fears, they are kindly pointed to the blood of sprinkling. Children are reminded of the kindness of the Saviour to them from their birth; and an excellent opportunity is afforded for exhorting the children to know the God of their fathers, to embrace him by faith as their God, and to "serve him with a willing mind and a perfect heart."

The charming language of infant baptism to parents and children is, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting," &c. &c. Ps. ciii. 13—18. Once more, infant baptism is calculated to be of great practical use to those who may be called *mere spectators*. To them it speaks in loud and solemn accents; and it belongs to the servant of God to expound to them its import, and enforce its doctrine on their consciences. To mere spectators its language is,—

"You, too, were shapen in iniquity, and you need to be saved by the washing of regeneration. There is a fountain opened; the blood of Jesus Christ is sufficient to cleanse *you* from all sin. But it must be ap-

plied, you must be born again, born of water and of the spirit, or you cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Think not to say within yourselves, ‘We have been baptized, and hope to be saved.’ Baptism with water is but an external sign of the necessity and the means of the washing of regeneration, without which you must perish. You have received the outward sign; it is so far well; but if you rest in that, you pervert it to your own certain and eternal destruction. The use of the sign is to excite you to seek from God, and in God’s appointed way, the spiritual blessings signified. He is not a Christian who is one outwardly, neither is that baptism which is outward in the flesh. If you rest in outward baptism, or in any outward privilege or observance, your baptism will be an everlasting witness against you, that you have rejected the great salvation to which it directed you. Repent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.”

The above is but a very imperfect outline of the practical use of infant baptism, which the intelligent Christian will easily fill up. It now remains to glance at some of the practical uses of the baptists’

ADULT IMMERSION.

WE begin with its practical use *to parents*. It is very necessary to direct their attention to this part of the system, because many of them were ignorant of the import of the act when they submitted to what our friends call **THE ORDINANCE**. To persuade the simple to do so, uses have been ascribed to “the ordinance,” which, in my opinion, almost exceed romance. Out of a large mass we take the following specimen, almost at random, from a very recent publication:—“Our friends will admit, because they frequently assert, that by baptism we have communion with Christ in his death, we enjoy a participation of the benefits of his death and resurrection, and are made conformable to the design of his death and resurrection,” &c. &c. The author of the above quotation is, to say the least, a bold man. He

gravely tells his readers (and, no doubt, many of them will believe his word), that the advocates of infant baptism not only admit, but frequently assert the doctrine in the text. He knows himself for what wise ends he has done so. But how does the fact stand supported? Why, instead of admitting or asserting the doctrine, in our serious belief it really exceeds romance. We believe, too, that it is one of the most pernicious errors of the system; and, we may venture to add, that, instead of the fellowship proposed, those who submit to be immersed, on the author's plan, will have fellowship with nothing by being rebaptized, but with water and drenched clothes: and that, without a miracle, the fellowship must be unnatural, since the parties are not agreed.

To be serious; when the simple are taught to believe that the above blessings are to be enjoyed by being immersed in water, is it any wonder that so many of them make the requisite sacrifices for their enjoyment? And what is the practical use of the doctrine in future life? Can any thing be more calculated to lead those who have been immersed to conclude, that they have now got almost all that is to be expected on this side heaven? And that, of course, they have little more to do in religion, but to glory in their attainments, and to endeavour by every means in their power to make proselytes. Far be it from me to insinuate, that this is the case with all who are immersed. On the contrary, I believe the author himself, as well as very many of his brethren, is living and labouring under the practical influence of better principles; but I do most explicitly affirm, that such is the natural and the practical tendency of the doctrine, when properly understood and believed; and it is on this account that I esteem it one of the most pernicious errors in the whole system. If by immersion in water I have "fellowship with Christ in his death, and enjoy a participation in all the blessings which result from his death and resurrection," and if by the same process I am really "made conformable to the design of his death and resurrection," pray, what more have I to ask or expect on this side eternal glory? And if I think that such is the case, must I

not feel it to be a paramount duty to do all in my power to persuade others to be immersed, that they also may have fellowship with me in these fine things?

No wonder that those who attach such a meaning to the rite of baptism will yield to no proof of the propriety of infant baptism; but it is both unjust and ungenerous to publish to the world, that those who practise infant baptism, not only allow, but frequently assert the above erroneous doctrine. So much for the practical use of adult immersion to the parents; proceed we now to examine its practical use

TO THEIR INFANTS.

Whatever good things the act of immersion is supposed to signify and seal to the parents, it certainly has a gloomy aspect toward their unconscious infants. I would most earnestly beseech parents to think seriously on this part of the system, and to pray fervently for the teaching of the Holy Spirit; and I do so from a conviction, that many of them have been immersed before they had time or opportunity to examine the aspect it bears toward their children. By being immersed on the baptist principles, they openly sealed the excision of their present and future offspring from the kingdom of God and from the covenants of promise; and by the same deed they have rejected every promise that respects the seed of the righteous, which is, of course, a rejection of every ground of hope for their own children. Some of them will disavow the above practical use of their baptism; but to those who understand the subject, the thing must be manifest. What baptist does not avow it to be his persuasion, that his infant seed have no interest in the everlasting covenant, or in any of its promises? or in any promise in the revelation of mercy? and is not his immersion an open avowal that such is his creed? This will appear still more manifest, by attending to the practical use of immersion to *the church* into the faith of which the parent is thus initiated. They must feel themselves called to hail him

as a beloved brother, and to rejoice that he has thus, by baptism, been brought to enjoy "fellowship with Christ in his death, to participate the blessings signified by his death and resurrection," &c. &c. And they will naturally glory in his immersion, especially if, as is generally the case, he has been proselyted from a pedit-baptist church. But what has become of his infants? As a body, the church into which he has been thus immersed have shut all the infants out. They have rejected that covenant, and all those precious promises which have linked parents and children together in its administration from the beginning. They have no promise to plead in behalf of their offspring at the throne of grace. To be sure they possess the belief, that if their infants die, they shall be saved, though they have neither believed nor were baptized; but where is their explicit warrant for such belief? How can they make this accord with their conduct in shutting them all out of the visible kingdom of God on earth? It now remains to glance at the practical use of adult immersion to the

MERE SPECTATORS.

In regard to its use to them, circumstances of time and place will make some difference. My illustration must, of course, be drawn from what is known to be exemplified among my nearest neighbours.

When an adult immersion takes place, in the presence of a mixed multitude, it becomes the occasion of much levity to some of them; in the minds of others its practical use is to produce pain, shame, and disgust, and that in no ordinary degree; and there are some who have not strength of nerve to witness the affecting scene. I shall not take upon me to determine whether or not these are the natural effects which must result from such an exhibition. This is a question which merits the serious examination of all the parties concerned, especially the *immerser* and the *immersed*. I have not forgotten, however, that there are other practical uses

made of this scheme of baptism, which, in the estimation of its advocates, more than counterbalance all the disagreeables that have been noticed. For example, an opportunity is afforded the immerser, which he will naturally be led to improve, not in the way of exhorting his disciples to bring forth fruits meet for repentance," &c. &c. nor of warning his hearers to "flee from the wrath to come," but by extolling the imaginary excellencies of the system, and the imaginary blessings to be enjoyed, signified, and sealed by immersion; such as, "conformity to Christ in his death and resurrection, &c. &c., by pouring forth a torrent of abusive epithets on God's ancient church and circumcision, and on infant baptism and its numerous advocates, &c. &c.; and the opportunity will be artfully and zealously improved for enforcing on the simple the necessity and importance of submitting to **THE ORDINANCE**.

From the above specimen of the practical uses of the ordinance in question, as exemplified by the friends and the enemies of infant baptism, let the reader judge which of the two opposite plans accords with the Bible. But it is objected,

V. That infant baptism confounds the church of Christ with the world. "A Jew," (we are told), "whether pious or immoral, could demand circumcision for his male offspring as a sign of the covenant; therefore, whosoever believes in Christianity may demand baptism for his children. 'This indeed would be a corrupt church; but, according to Dr W.'s reasoning, it would be the church of Christ,' &c. &c.

In opposition to the baptist system in general, and to the above writer in particular, we have seen that an immoral Jew, or his offspring, had as little right to God's covenant, or to its significant seal, as an immoral Gentile. Unto the immoral Jew, God said, "What hast thou to do?"—"that thou shouldest take my **COVENANT** in thy mouth?" Until the baptist settle this part of their glaring **CONTROVERSY** with Jehovah about the case of the **IMMORAL JEW**, I might be excused in dismissing this objection without further notice; but as it

will afford an opportunity of making a further exposure of the errors of the system, and as the baptists zealously urge it to bewilder the simple, the reader will bear with the following attempt to give it a more detailed exposure. Our friends will admit, because they frequently assert, that circumcision was intended to be a sign of distinction between the Jewish church and the world; and they will also allow, that baptism has a similar use in the church of Christ. Very good! It is true, that although Jehovah planted it a noble vine, wholly a right seed, in process of time it became the degenerate plant of a strange vine. In other words, the Jews in general broke God's covenant, and thus the faithful city became an harlot. But is this apostacy to be ascribed in whole or in part to infant circumcision? If not, the baptists' argument is annihilated. But this is not all; the real truth is, that the degeneracy can be distinctly traced to the baptists' view of the Abrahamic covenant, which the generality of the Jews adopted, and by the adoption of which they overlooked the grand leading design of infant circumcision. In proof of this, the reader must keep in mind the standing law which the Author of circumcision ordained in Israel, in inseparable connexion with the institute. The law to which we refer is, that every Jew or Gentile, who got his male children circumcised, was bound, like Abraham, to teach his children and his household to keep the way of the Lord. I entreat the reader to consider the proof which the following texts will afford him: Ex. xx. 1—17; Deut. iv. 1—9, and v. 1—21, and vi. 1—15, and vii. 7—11; Ps. lxxviii. 1—8. It is just so with regard to infant baptism. God's ordinance for circumcised children is substantially the same under every dispensation of the covenant, viz.—that their parents should diligently bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and one chief end proposed by God in these kindred institutes is, that by them the seed of the righteous might be separated to him from the world, and trained up in the way in which they ought to go. See Eph. vi. 1—4.

Those Jews and Gentile converts, who understood

the spiritual nature of Jehovah's everlasting covenant, and who, by unfeigned faith, embraced its spiritual promises, by the influence of that faith, yielded spiritual obedience to its spiritual precepts. These were the genuine Jews to whom the honourable appellation, THE CIRCUMCISION, belonged. (Compare Rom. ii. 28, 29, with Phil. iii. 3.) Of these the apostle selects a cloud of witnesses, whose faith the generality of real Christians are following, indeed very imperfectly. See Heb. xi. To their knowledge and belief of what is literally promised in the Abrahamic covenant, in its gradual development, all their noble achievements are justly ascribed.*

But, as has been already hinted, the body of the Jews adopted the baptist views of the covenant and of circumcision, and trained up their children in the same erroneous sentiments and practice. People are deplorably prone to retain the outward institutions of revealed mercy, while they neglect the mercy therein exhibited. Many do retain the form of baptism as the apostate Jews did circumcision, while, like them, they neglect the blessings and the duties thereby signified. And, in fact, the baptists' theory, when followed out, leads directly to this. The Jews, like the baptists, assigned a meaning to circumcision directly opposed to the mind of God, and they followed it out in their practice. For example, they believed that, in virtue of their relation to Abraham, they had a right to get their children circumcised, however wicked they might be; and that, being circumcised, they were in covenant with God, and that no impropriety of conduct could deprive them of the privileges of the Abrahamic family. This was their great and fatal error,—the rock on which, “concerning faith, they made shipwreck;” and it pains me to add, that to the same rock the baptists' sentiments, on circumcision and baptism, directly lead. I trust the reader sees this. Instead of the important

* I request the baptists to tell me, if they think that the characters referred to were *better* than God commanded *them*, and *all* to be, under the Mosaic œconomy?

objects for which God hath instituted baptism, they teach and affirm, that it signifies and seals to the immersed all those spiritual blessings to which it refers. This was precisely the erroneous opinion which the apostate Jews held of circumcision ; and to expose this their error was the apostle's leading design in ch. ii. iii. iv.—ix. x. and xi. of his epistle to the Romans, which Scriptures I would advise my readers to examine carefully on the subject.*

But to come to the point : So long as baptism is understood and observed agreeably to the intention of its author, and while believers observe and do what he has connected with their own baptism and that of their infants, it will be found impossible to confound the church of Christ with the world. It has already been observed, that the baptism of infants is designed as a pledge to the churches, that their parents shall bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Let all concerned see to it that the pledge be faithfully redeemed. If they do so, and if, notwithstanding, few or many of the children become persecutors like Ishmael, or profane rejectors of God's covenant like Esau, like them they forfeit their privileges ; and, if they do not go out of their own accord, they must be put out of the visible kingdom of Christ, as must be the case with every other root of bitterness. This is the plan which the Lord hath ordained under every dispensation of his mercy for preserving the purity of his church. The reader may compare Deut. xxix. 10—21, with Heb. xii. 15—17.

In the first of these passages, Jesus, by the ministry of Moses, solemnly enjoins his church, under the law, to look diligently lest there should be among them man, woman, or family, departing from God by an evil heart of unbelief ; and in the latter, by the ministry of the apostle, Jesus enjoins precisely the same thing in all his churches under the Gospel. It was not by infant circumcision, but by neglecting the important du-

* See also Jer. vii. 1—23 ; Ezek. xxxiii. 24—28 ; Is. xxviii. 14—20 ; John viii. 33—44.

ties to which circumcision bound them, that the Jewish church came to that state of corruption in which she soon appeared. It is by a similar process to which human nature is alike prone in every age, and not by infant baptism, but in direct opposition to its nature and design, that churches have exhibited similar corruption under the clearer light of the Gospel.

Let baptism be administered to the infant seed of none but such as appear to be real disciples; let believing parents hold fast the promises of God in reference to their offspring; and, animated by these, let them diligently instruct and fervently pray for their children; and let churches look diligently that no family among them be neglecting this important branch of their duty. Let such as are found negligent be admonished as the case requires; and when parents and children are deaf to admonition, let them be treated as were the bond woman and her son, that the churches may not be defiled by the root of bitterness. By the grace of God, all this is quite practicable, and if it be conscientiously practised, it will be found impossible to confound the church with the world.

VI. It is objected, that, if in virtue of the Abrahamic covenant, the infant seed of believers should be circumcised, upon the same principle they ought to eat the Lord's supper; and that none are proper subjects for baptism, but such as may immediately after eat the Lord's supper. A child of eight days old was, in the estimation of God, as duly qualified for circumcision as Abraham was when he was ninety-nine years old. Will the objectors maintain, that, when circumcised the eighth day, the infant was as well qualified for eating flesh,—for girding his loins, taking the pilgrims' staff in his hand? &c. See Ex. xii. 11. If not, the argument is a pure sophism, and as such it might be dismissed; but, for the sake of those for whom it was invented, I shall, as usual, attempt to give it a more serious exposure.

Our objectors take it for granted, that it was quite consistent with God's design in instituting circumcision

and the passover, that the Jewish children should partake of the latter as well as the former, without being instructed in the knowledge and the faith of its nature and design. But this is a gross mistake, which every attentive reader of the Bible may easily detect, by the following simple process. We have seen that God made it a standing law in his church, that every head of a family should diligently instruct his family in all things which he had commanded them. He enjoined this on the fathers, that their children, being thus instructed, might be qualified for observing his commandments. If the reader will turn once more to Psalm lxxviii. 5—7, he will see the following ends to be kept in view by the fathers when instructing their children. (1.) That their children might know, or, in other words, understand God's testimony and law. (2.) That, understanding them, they might put their trust in God. (3.) That, trusting in God, they might remember, so as to obey all God's commands. A more plain law was never given; but it happens to be in opposition to the baptist system. Besides, at the original institution of the passover, the Lord expressly commanded the fathers in all time coming to instruct their children in the nature of it, that they might thus be qualified to keep it in faith. See Ex. xii. 26, 27. And in the law which he ordained, at the same time for the admission of Gentile converts, it is very plainly intimated, that circumcision did not qualify the subjects for an immediate participation of the passover. "When a stranger shall sojourn with you, and will keep the passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let HIM," (not them,) "come near and keep it," &c. Ex. xii. 48, 49. Before HE could come near to keep the passover to the Lord, his *children* must be consecrated to the Lord, the males by circumcision, the females by baptism, that they might be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. This is precisely the order which the same Lord hath ordained in reference to the two corresponding institutes, viz. baptism and the Lord's supper. The baptists think they have found out a more excellent way. They come near to keep

the Christian passover to the Lord, while they refuse to have their children separated to the Lord, by that ordinance which he hath instituted for the purpose. In this I have no doubt they act conscientiously; at the same time they not only act without precept or precedent; they do it in opposition to the order which (so far as can be learned from the Bible) Christ has established in his house under every dispensation of his mercy.

That multitudes of Jewish parents and children did eat the passover in ignorance and unbelief is certain; but let the opposers of infant baptism try if they can find a single example of parents or children who did so acceptably. On the contrary, they will find that a great portion of the Scriptures is occupied in reprobating the wickedness of such conduct, and calling them to repentance. The Jews, under the law, were as distinctly assured, as we are under the gospel, that “without faith it is impossible to please God;” and that the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord. Let the reader consult Isaiah, i. 1—18, and xxix. 13, 14. Ezek. xxxiii. 30—33, as a specimen. And let him remember that the question is not, What professors of religion have done under the law or under the gospel? The great question is, What hath the Lord commanded them to be and to do? By keeping this acknowledged distinction in memory, and examining the Bible on the subject, it will be found that every objection which has been invented against infant baptism is lighter than vanity.

VII. The only other objection which shall be noticed is thus announced:—“If infant baptism rests on the faith of the parent, we must be sure that our parents were believers ere we can be sure that we have received Christian baptism.” This objection, although somewhat plausible, is a mere *scarecrow*, which the ingenuity of man has sought out, and set up to fright timorous children. As not a few of God’s children have been alarmed and driven to the water by it to quell their fears, and as others are still exposed, it will be necessary to examine it a little.

In doing so, I remark,—

1st, That infant baptism does not rest either on the faith or the unbelief of parents or children. The Author of baptism never vested it, nor any other religious institute, in any thing that pertains to mortal men. The great truths to which baptism bears witness are eternal and immutable; and the great duties which the observance of it imply are of unalterable obligation, whatever be the characters of those who observe the ordinance. When I see the bow in the heavens it brings to my mind the covenant of which it is at once the sign and the seal; it is not necessary for me to ascertain the characters of my progenitors, in order that I may exercise the confidence and enjoy the comfort which that covenant is intended to afford, of which the bow in the heavens is the faithful witness.

To insinuate that infant baptism rests on the faith of parents, is just as absurd as it would be to assert that the two ends of the rainbow still rest on the faith of Noah. The plain truth is, that the bow in the heavens and infant baptism rest exactly and immutably on the same basis,—*viz.* THE SOVEREIGN APPOINTMENT OF GOD.

2d, The validity of those external institutes which God hath appointed does not depend on the faith or the unbelief of those who administer or receive them. Baptism is Christ's ordinance. It never can be lawfully observed by the same subjects but once; and the only thing which they are called to ascertain is, whether or not they are the subjects of the blessings signified by baptism, and are attending to the duties to which their baptism binds them. They are called to examine whether they be in the faith, but they are never called to examine whether they or their parents were in the faith when they were baptized.

3d, It is inconsistent with the revealed character of God to perplex the minds of his people with such untaught questions; and there is a degree of imprudence and cruelty manifested by agitating them worthy of the end they are intended to promote. The thing proposed is in many cases one of those secret things which belong

exclusively to the Lord to determine. There is not a hint in the Bible which gives any countenance to such inquiries. The great truths signified by baptism are immutable as Jehovah's throne. If we have been baptized in infancy, and have by grace been made partakers of the blessings signified, we have no more need to ascertain whether our parents or the administrators were believers than we have to ascertain who was the father of Melchizedek. To ascertain the one is, in many cases, as impossible as the other; and the one has just as little connexion with the validity of our baptism as the other.

All that we need to know in regard to the matter is, that baptism is Christ's ordinance,—that we have been baptized with water into the name of the Trinity, and that we were such in virtue of the profession of the Christian faith made by our parents at the time. For walking by this rule we have examples innumerable. Jonathan was a good man, but Saul his father was wicked. Was Jonathan's circumcision invalidated by his father's unbelief? Was Jonathan taught to be re-circumcised? Ahaz was pre-eminent in wickedness; he made some of his children pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen. Hezekiah his son was pre-eminently godly, and who ever was heard to call in question the validity of his circumcision? or that he was or ought to have been re-circumcised? Amon, the father of Josiah, forsook the God of his fathers; Josiah his son was eminently pious. Did the apostacy of his father invalidate Josiah's circumcision?

Examples of the same kind might be multiplied; but to these we shall only add the case of a multitude of converts, from what may justly be called an anti-christian church, perhaps as corrupt as is the mother of abominations at this hour.

During the reign of good king Hezekiah, he sent heralds to the apostate tribes of Israel, saying, "Ye children of Israel, turn again unto the Lord God of Abraham," &c. &c. Many of those to whom they were sent despised the messengers of mercy, but a goodly

number obeyed the gracious invitation. Their fathers were in a state of apostacy and unbelief at the time of their circumcision. When the children returned to the Lord God of Abraham, and had come to Jerusalem to keep the passover to the Lord, was the validity of their circumcision called in question by any of their brethren there? or did any of them insinuate that, before they could be allowed to enjoy fellowship with them, they must first receive, shall I say, orthodox circumcision? By no means. It was left to the zealous opposers of infant baptism to invent such unchristian insinuations; and, in short, there is only one thing that rendered circumcision, or that can render infant baptism, of none effect. "Circumcision verily profiteth IF THOU KEEP THE LAW: but if thou be A BREAKER OF THE LAW, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision." —Rom. ii. 25.

As I recollect nothing more suitable, I shall conclude my reply to our friends' objections, by directing their *attention* to a fact or two which deserves the serious consideration of all parties. The faithful friends of God, under every dispensation of his mercy, have occupied their zeal, their time, and their talents, in teaching and preaching those things which are signified by the external ordinances which God has appointed. It will be impossible to find a single exception to this in the history of the church from the beginning. On the other hand, those who have spent their zeal and their strength about mere outside things, and in making proselytes, are, in the Bible, branded as *troublers* of the people of God,—as characters who should be *avoided*. I would entreat the opposers of infant baptism, for their own sake, to ponder the above facts. Let them try if they can find, in the book of God, a parallel to their zeal in perplexing the churches of Christ, but among the ancient Pharisees and Judaizers. The cry of the ancient troublers of the churches was, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." The cry of the baptists is, Except ye be plunged after the manner of Christ. They

do not say in plain words, Ye cannot be saved; but in an indirect manner they do insinuate the doctrine.

Those who have an opportunity of being acquainted with the conduct of the generality of the Scots baptists will, from their own experience, bear me witness, that the above portrait is not overcoloured. Examples without number might be adduced to substantiate what has been hinted; let the following specimen suffice:—Happening to be in company with a baptist friend, a reference was made to a neighbour who is a member of a pædo-baptist church. With more zeal than prudence, my friend heedlessly said,—“*A thousand times over have I endeavoured to make him a baptist, but I do not think he will ever be one.*”

When the baptists are reminded of their striking resemblance to the ancient Judaizers in this matter, they stoutly deny the fact, as the person referred to above did. But their conduct is really too well known to require the formality of proof. I conclude this part of the subject by requesting believers in general, and young believers in particular, to listen to the following apostolic exhortation:—

“Now, I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.” Rom. xvi. 17, 18.

Having now endeavoured to prove, from the Scriptures *alone*, that infant baptism is Christ’s ordinance, I do not think it necessary to *say* much, or to *rest* any article of my belief on the testimony of the fathers. It is my conviction, however, that they do bear witness, in language sufficiently plain, that infant baptism was universally practised by the primitive churches. It has been already noticed, that one of the earliest of them, who was himself made a disciple in infancy in the apostolic age, bears testimony for infant baptism in the very words of the apostles’ commission. To this I will now add a few facts, which, for aught I know, are undis-

puted. Origen was born within a hundred years of the apostolic age. His father and grandfather before him were Christians. He was one of the most learned men of the age in which he lived. He had visited and preached in ROME, in GREECE, in PALESTINE, and SYRIA; he must therefore have been well acquainted with the doctrine and the practice both of the apostles and first churches. The following is a specimen of what he testifies concerning the prevailing practice of infant baptism in all the churches:—"The church had also from the apostles an order to give baptism to infants; for they to whom the divine mysteries were committed knew that there was in all persons a natural pollution, which ought to be washed away by water and the spirit."

PELAGIUS, who was contemporary with AUSTIN, denied the doctrine of original sin, and taught that infants are born free from any sinful defilement. Austin wrote against him, and, among other arguments, urged the well-known and the universal practice of infant baptism in all the churches. His argument is thus stated:—"That infants are by all Christians acknowledged to stand in need of baptism, which must be for original sin in them, since they have no other."—"If they have no sin, why are they accepted to the usage of church baptism? Why are they washed if they have no defilement?" With this argument Pelagius found himself hard pressed; it laid him under the strongest temptations to deny the fact, that infant baptism is of Divine origin. But he knew that would not do; he knew that the thing was indisputable, and, instead of attempting it, he bears the following explicit testimony to the universality of the practice:—"Men slander me as if I denied baptism to infants, whereas I never heard of any, not the worst of heretics, who would say such a thing of infants." This testimony proves decidedly that infant baptism was the universal and the undisputed practice of all the churches at the period to which it refers. Had it been called in question, Pelagius must have heard of it; for this he had the best opportunity. He was a great scholar and a great traveller.

He had been in ROME, in AFRICA, in EGYPT, and in JERUSALEM, and in these places much of his time had been spent. With the testimony of the fathers and the practice of the churches he was well acquainted; he had embraced a sentiment which he himself could not reconcile with the practice of infant baptism, and yet he felt constrained to testify that he never heard of any who denied infant baptism. Reader, what do you say to these things? What can prejudice say against them?

To the above I shall subjoin the following quotation from Dr Dwight, which he gives as the result of an extensive examination of the subject:—"During the first four hundred years from the formation of the Christian church, Tertullian only urged the delay of baptism to infants, and that only in some cases; and Gregory only delayed it perhaps to his own children. But neither any society of men nor any individual denied the lawfulness of infant baptism. In the next seven hundred years there was not a society nor an individual who ever pleaded for this delay, much less any who denied the right or the duty of infant baptism. In the year 1120, one sect of the Waldenses declared against the baptism of infants, because they supposed them incapable of salvation; but the main body of that people rejected the opinion as heretical, and the sect which held it soon came to nothing. The next appearance of this opinion was in the year 1522."*

Let us attempt to reconcile the above well-attested facts to the arrogant claims of the opposers of infant baptism. The name which they have gratuitously assumed is intended to bear witness that they ALONE are the legitimate followers of the apostles and first Christians, in observing the ordinance of baptism. The whole Christian world knows with what unwearied zeal

* DWIGHT'S THEOLOGY. It is fair to acknowledge, that my quotations from the FATHERS are second-hand. I am not so rich as to possess any of their works; but this does not render the testimonies less true or less conclusive. "A true tale is not the worse for being twice told."

they have protested, and do protest, against infant baptism. Suppose, then, that the apostles and the primitive churches were such zealous opposers of infant baptism as are these their pretended successors, what would have become of their zeal during the eleven first centuries? We have seen that, during that long period, there was not one Christian or heretic to be found that doubted or disputed the Divine authority of infant baptism, although it was well known to have been practised universally in all the churches.* I ask, therefore, what became of the zealous opposers of infant baptism,—the only faithful followers of the Lamb,—during the very long period referred to? Had they all fallen asleep at their post? Was there not one faithful church? Was there not even one faithful believer to lift up tongue or pen against what some of their pretended successors pronounced a forgery on the God of heaven? No, not one: during all that period of light and darkness, the Divine authority of infant baptism had never been called in question; and the truth is, and should be plainly told, that

THE UNITED VOICE OF ANTIQUITY, OF PROPHETS, AND OF APOSTLES, IS DECIDEDLY AGAINST THE BAPTIST SCHEME OF BAPTISM.

When the design of writing the preceding pages was formed, it was no part of the plan to include the question respecting the mode of administering baptism. In the process of investigation, I read in a recent baptist publication the following very gross libel against the advocates of infant baptism:—"Many, if not a majority, of their living teachers," (viz. the pedobaptists) "constantly admit one-half of our arguments for the *mode* of baptism." When I read the above kind compliment, the question naturally occurred,—How has the author come to know, that a majority of the many thousands of the pedobaptist living teachers constantly

* *Tertullian*, although often quoted, is no exception; though he disputed the expediency, he never attempted to dispute the lawfulness, or the Divine authority, of infant baptism.

admit what they do not believe? Recollecting, however, as I have already proved, that the distinguishing peculiarities of the baptist system rest on inference, I began to think that it must have been by inference that the author came to know the fact which he has thus unblushingly published before the "wide world." Perhaps it is true that the majority of the living teachers, which he has thus exposed, have not published their sentiments on the subject, and their silence is taken for sufficient evidence that the case is as it has been represented. One idea frequently begets another: I next thought that, if no notice were taken of the mode in this publication, our friends might infer that the writer had generously admitted both halves of their argument. To prevent this, I have resolved to present them with the following brief statement of the ground of my faith and practice with respect to the

MODE OF BAPTISM.

THE controversy between us and the baptists about the mode resolves itself into the following simple question:—

Whether does Christian baptism consist in the application of clean water directly to the open face of the baptized? or in the application of the covered body of the baptized into the water?

I feel assured beyond a doubt, that Christian baptism consists in the direct application of clean water to the flesh of the baptized, and my conviction is grounded on the following plain facts:—

I. The Bible affords ample evidence that, when the word βαπτίζω (baptize) is applied to symbolical religious rites, these rites are uniformly performed by applying the baptismal elements to the person or thing to be baptized. Whatever be the radical signification of the term, the above is most evidently its meaning in the Bible, when applied to symbolical institutions.

The baptists stoutly maintain that to baptize is to

immerse, and that nothing short of the total immersion of the body is Christian baptism, either in name or thing. But what saith the Scripture? It is fair to examine how the above assertion and the following Scripture facts agree or differ.

We are told (1 Cor. x. 2,) that the ancient church, consisting of men, women, and children, “were all baptized into Moses, in the cloud and in* the sea.” Now the question is, Were the bodies of the great congregation plunged into the cloud and the sea? or were the waters of the cloud poured on them? The history informs us, that the baptized, on this occasion, went into the midst of the sea *as on dry land*. Hence we know, that their bodies were not plunged into the waters of the sea. It informs us farther, that the cloud which had hitherto gone before them changed its position on the occasion referred to. It moved to their rear to guard them from their enemies. See Ex. xiv.

No particular mention is made of the mode of baptism on this occasion by Moses; but, if we admit the Psalmist’s testimony, the mode in which the children of Israel were baptized into Moses is ascertained with infallible certainty. “Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah. The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled. THE CLOUDS Poured out water,” &c. &c. Ps. lxxvii. 15—20.

Instead of having their bodies plunged into the cloud or the sea, the people were baptized into Moses by having the waters of the cloud **POURED OUT ON THEM**.

Again,—The apostle tells us (Heb. ix. 10,) that the ceremonial law stood in diverse *βαπτισμοίς*, (baptisms.) Here again the question is, Did these diverse baptisms consist in the application of the persons and things baptized to the divers elements used? or was it performed by the application of the elements to the persons and things baptized? If the apostle be admitted to be a

* Or at the sea.

just expositor of his own words, we have assured evidence that the baptisms to which he refers were all performed by the application of the diverse elements to the diverse persons and things which were thus baptized. It requires no critical knowledge of Hebrew or Greek to ascertain this. The reader has only to read the chapter, and hear the apostle's description of the diverse baptisms to which he refers. "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer SPRINKLING the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot unto God, purge your conscience from dead works?" "When Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and SPRINKLED both the book, and all the people." "Moreover, he SPRINKLED likewise with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry," &c. &c. Heb. ix. 10—23.

These are the diverse baptisms to which the apostle refers (in my opinion, exclusively), and such is his own very plain account of the mode of administering the divinely-instituted ordinance of baptism, under the law. We are elsewhere assured, that Moses did according to all that the Lord commanded him; but Moses did not plunge the book of the law, the people, the tabernacle, or any of the vessels of ministry, into the elements appointed, but he SPRINKLED the elements on the persons and things which were thus symbolically sanctified or separated to the service of God.

Had there been any baptists among the people, upon their principles, they would have told Moses to his face, as our baptists, in effect, tell Paul in the face of the above plain testimonies, that his *sprinkling* was not *baptism*,—"that it was not the ordinance of Christ, either in name or thing." But the apostle assures us, that, in the estimation of God, *sprinkling* the *unclean* is *baptism*, and that such is the mode of baptism which he hath appointed to be observed in his church, for separating his people for his service. This, of itself,

should have put an eternal end to all controversy about the mode of baptism. But,

Further,—“ I indeed have baptized you with water : but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.” Mark i. 8.

From the circumstance of John’s preaching to and baptizing the vast multitudes that resorted to him in places where they could be abundantly supplied with water,—an element which was indispensably necessary for them,—the baptists infer that, in opposition to what we have seen to be the divinely-instituted mode of baptism, John baptized the people by plunging them totally under the element. On the supposition that he did so, it was a new thing in the history of redemption. But the question to be determined from the text at present is,—Did the Saviour plunge the disciples into the Holy Ghost ? or did he, in fulfilling John’s testimony, pour out the Holy Ghost upon the disciples ? If our friends will admit the inspired evangelist to be a faithful reporter of the fact, they must allow that Jesus did not apply the disciples to the Holy Spirit, but he baptized them with the Holy Ghost, by POURING OUT of his Spirit upon them ; and that it had been foretold by the prophet Joel, that this was the mode in which the Saviour was to baptize with the Holy Spirit. These are strong facts, but they are well attested. In Acts ii. we have the following proofs :—“ And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of *fire*, and it SAT UPON EACH OF THEM. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.” “ This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel ; and it shall come to pass in the last days, (saith God,) I will POUR OUT of my Spirit upon all flesh.” “ Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath SHED FORTH this, which ye now see and hear.”

To the foregoing examples more might be added ; but surely the number is more than sufficient to prove the following proposition :—

WHATEVER BE THE RADICAL SIGNIFICATION of βαπτίζω, (BAPTIZE,) WHEN APPLIED IN THE SCRIPTURE

TO SYMBOLICAL WASHING, ITS SACRED AND APPROPRIATE MEANING IS, TO APPLY THE ELEMENT TO THE SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM BY POURING OR SPRINKLING: BUT

Candid reader, permit me now to propose a question. Can you bring yourself to believe that, when Jesus instituted that ordinance, by which his people are symbolically set apart for him, he assigned a meaning to the word by which it is called directly opposed to that which the same word had, at least from the days of Moses, when applied to those symbolical actions whereby persons and things were separated for divine service?"

From the examples which have been considered, I think it sufficiently obvious that, if most or many of dead or living teachers have kindly admitted this first and formidable argument of the baptists, (viz. that to baptize is to immerse,) their generosity is more to be admired than their orthodoxy; for they not only have done it gratuitously, but they have done it in opposition to some of the plainest examples in the Bible.

II. The next fact upon which my conviction rests is, —“The sacred appropriate mode of applying the element of baptism to the person baptized, is that alone which can properly represent what is signified by Christian baptism.”

The baptists, having assigned a meaning to the ordinance of baptism which its Author never intended, have of course adopted a mode to correspond with that their erroneous meaning. They affirm, as we have seen, that “by baptism they have fellowship with Christ in his death and resurrection,” &c. &c.; and, to suit this fine fancy, they have adopted a mode which they imagine gives a lively representation of the burial and resurrection of Christ. For this they quote Rom. vi. 3, 4.; Col. ii. 12. In these texts the apostle neither describes nor refers to the mode of baptism. Of this the most illiterate Christian may satisfy himself by carefully reading them in connexion with the preceding and following contexts. Christians are said to have been bu-

ried with Christ by baptism, just as the ancient churches are said to have been baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. Jesus, as their substitute, died for their sins according to the Scriptures; he was buried, and rose again, according to the Scriptures. So the apostles preached, and so their disciples believed; and into their professed belief of this epitome of Christian doctrine the apostles baptized, or commanded them to be baptized. Hence they exhort the baptized to prove the reality of their faith by what they professed in being baptized into Jesus Christ. The apostle, Rom. vi. 3, 4, 5, is dehorting from sin, and exhorting to holiness and new obedience. There is not one word nor one expression that mentions any resemblance between dipping in water and the death and burial of Christ,—not one word that mentions a resemblance between our rising out of water and the resurrection of Christ. Our being buried with him by baptism unto death, (ver. 4,) is our being planted together in the likeness of his death, ver. 5. Our being planted together in the likeness of his death is not our being dipped in water, but the crucifixion of the old man, ver. 6. Our being raised up with Christ from the dead is not our rising from under the water, but our walking in newness of life, (ver. 4,) by virtue of the resurrection of Christ.—1 Pet. iii. 21.* But to come directly to the question at issue: I have said that the application of clean water directly to the flesh of the baptized is the divinely-instituted mode of baptism, and the only one that can fitly represent the things signified by Christian baptism. Among these I notice the following:—

1st, *The application of the blood of Christ to the soul by the Holy Spirit.* That this is one of the principal blessings signified by baptism is indisputable; and here there are two questions to be examined by the Scripture: (1.) Whether is the Holy Ghost communicated, for the purpose of applying the blood of Christ to the

* Dr Owen.—The reader will find a luminous and highly interesting illustration of the texts referred to in the above paragraph, and indeed of the whole subject of baptism, in Mr Ewing's late Essay on Baptism.

soul, by dipping or pouring? The Bible furnishes us with an answer to this question, which prejudice can hardly dispute:—for example: “Then will I **SPRINKLE** clean water upon you, and ye shall be **CLEAN**,” &c.—Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. “And it shall come to pass afterwards, that I will **POUR OUT** of my spirit upon all flesh,” &c.—Joel ii. 28, 29. “And I will **POUR UPON** the house of David,—the spirit of grace,” &c.—Zech. xii. 10. “This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; and it shall come to pass in the last days, (saith God,) I will **POUR OUT** of my Spirit upon all flesh,” &c.—Acts ii. 16, 17. “And they of the circumcision were astonished, because that on the Gentiles also was **POURED OUT** the gift of the Holy Ghost.”—Acts x. 45. The above passages need no comment; but it may be proper to remind the reader, that the pouring out of the spirit is denominated baptism, for this good reason: baptism with water symbolically represents the *mode* in which the spirit is communicated, viz. “as the rain and the snow that cometh down from heaven.” “For John truly *baptized* with water; but ye shall be *baptized* with the Holy Ghost,” &c.—Acts i. 5. “Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said,—John indeed *baptized* with water; but ye shall be *baptized* with the Holy Ghost.”

Reader, are you not now convinced, that, since the communication of the spirit is one of the chief things signified by baptism, that thing cannot be signified by applying the body to water? and that, in order that the symbol may represent the thing signified, the pure water must be applied to the body of the baptized, by sprinkling or pouring. But (2.) When the Lord pours out his spirit to wash the soul in the blood of Christ, whether does the spirit plunge the soul into the blood of Christ, or sprinkle the blood of Christ on the guilty soul?—The following texts answer the question: “For if the blood of bulls and of goats, &c. *sprinkling* the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ,—purge your conscience from dead works,” &c. Heb. ix. 13, 14. The sprinkling of the blood of Christ to the purging of the

conscience, is the antitype of the sprinkling of the unclean under the law: hence we read of having the heart *sprinkled* from an evil conscience, which can be done by nothing but the sprinkling or application of the blood of Christ. Heb. x. 22. Accordingly those who have been purged by the blood of Christ are thus addressed:—Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and *sprinkling* of the blood of Jesus Christ, &c. &c. 1 Pet. i. 2. Can *immersing* the covered body under the water represent the *sprinkling* of the blood of Christ on the conscience? Is not the thing signified properly represented by pouring or sprinkling clean water on the open face of the baptized?

Reader, *judge* for yourself, but do not trifle with the verdict of conscience.

2d, *Baptism with water is the emblem of regeneration.* Regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit. The question to be determined here is,—Are sinners regenerated by having their hearts applied to, or, if you will, plunged into the spirit? Or are they regenerated by having the Spirit poured out in their heart? The following texts decidedly answer these questions: “Then will I *sprinkle* clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you,” &c. Ezek. xxxvi, 25, 26. According to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he *shed* on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, &c. Tit. iii, 5. 6. We have seen that the pouring out of the Holy Spirit is repeatedly called *BAPTISM* in the New Testament,—since, therefore, in the work of regeneration, (the thing signified by water-baptism,) the Spirit is uniformly said to be *POURED OUT*, *SHED FORTH*, or *SPRINKLED UPON*, the regenerated, I leave it again with the reader to judge, which of the two forms of baptism most fitly represents the thing signified.—Will even prejudice itself, viewing the subject through the medium of system, venture to affirm, that plunging the body *UNDER WATER*

can at all represent the POURING OUT of the Spirit as clean water on the soul? Is there any conceivable resemblance between the cloud's pouring down water from above, and men's plunging the person to be baptized below the flood?

3d, *Baptism is the divinely-instituted sign of separation to the service of God.* Hence the baptism which Christ instituted in his church must be succeeded with teaching the baptized to observe all things which he hath commanded. The element which Christ selected is pure water. It was as unnecessary for him, in giving the commission to his apostles, or at any former period of their ministry, to mention how the water was to be applied, as it would have been to have instructed them how to put on their sandals. The mode of baptizing persons or things which were thus set apart for his service, was pointed out by precept and example, in his church, for ages before the apostles were born; and they must have been perfectly acquainted with it. We have already had occasion to point out the divinely-instituted mode of applying the element or elements of baptism; but the reader will be nothing the worse for hearing it again:—"And Moses took the blood, and *sprinkled* it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you," &c. &c. Referring to this consecration, which the apostle calls baptism, he thus records the facts:—"When Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and *sprinkled* both the book and all the people," &c. &c. See and compare Ex. xxiv. 8, and Heb. ix. 19—22.

I would now request the reader to compare the preceding Scripture facts together, and then tell me, if, by any process of reasoning, he can bring his mind to believe, that when Jesus instituted baptism with water to be the sign of consecration to his service, he changed the sacred appropriate use of the word βαπτίζω, (baptize,) and prescribed a mode of observing the ordinance of baptism directly opposed to that which had been in use from the beginning in his church, and to that which

the ordinance was intended to signify?—Be this as it will, I feel persuaded that the facts which have now been presented, taken separately or in unison, are quite sufficient to regulate my faith and practice as to the mode, and to prove that plunging into water is not the appointment of the only wise God. But, in connexion with these, I observe,—

III. That the application of clean water to the open face of the baptized, by *pouring* or *sprinkling*, is the only mode of the two that is both practical and safe, *in all places, in all cases, and in all circumstances.* The reader should recollect, that baptism is a duty which the baptizer is bound to perform on demand, whenever a qualified subject is presented; and since it is so, that mode of administering the ordinance which accords with the statement just given, bids fairest to be the right one. In all the instances of baptism recorded in the Scripture, we do not read of any delay or difficulty in administering baptism to qualified subjects.—When the ordinance was observed, as it frequently was, without doors, whether the candidates were few or many, male or female, whether water was rough or smooth, great or small, we do not read of the least difficulty or delay.* It was exactly the same when candidates were presented within doors,—whether it were in the temple, the jail, or the dwelling houses of the candidates, all parties found the duty quite practicable, without any difficulty or delay. I put it to the conscience of baptists, especially that of baptist teachers, to say, if they are prepared to affirm, that their mode of baptism is practicable in similar circumstances, without any delay or difficulty? Suppose that some baptist minister were to commence preaching and baptizing in a wilderness on the banks of the Spey;—let us further suppose that the inhabitants of INVERNESS, NAIRN, FORRES, ELGIN, &c. &c., and of all the surrounding countries, were to come and submit to his preaching, and demand baptism on the spot;—will any of the

* The case of the eunuch is no exception.

advocates for plunging affirm that he would undertake the task of baptizing them all in that form, male and female, without any difficulty or delay, and without any previous preparation? The thing is absolutely impossible. And, even in the case we have supposed, our immersers would not have one half of the work, nor one half of the difficulties, which John Baptist must have had in case of his having adopted the plan of immersion. For we read that there went out to John, “All the land of Judea,”—“and they of Jerusalem,” and were baptized of him *in* or rather *at* the Jordan, &c. Mark i. 5. Again,

Let us suppose the case, that a dozen of our baptist preachers were admitted to preach to as many thousands of the enemies of Christ in St Paul’s cathedral, London, and on the supposition that three thousand of them were converted, and instantly demanded baptism on the spot,—I ask again, would our twelve baptist preachers find it practicable to plunge them all under water, men and women, and lift them up, and lead them out of the water on the same day,—and that too without any previous preparation for the task? But even the case supposed does not combine half the difficulties which must have presented themselves to the twelve apostles on the day of Pentecost. No doubt the river Thames would afford plenty of water for immersing three thousand converts; and I believe the good citizens of London would offer no resistance. But would it have been so in Jerusalem?—In what pool or river did the apostles find water sufficient for plunging the three thousand converts on the day of Pentecost? Where did the converts, many of whom had come from a distance, find change of raiment?—Were they plunged naked or clothed? These are questions which cannot be answered; and they refer to facts which can never be made consistent with the baptists’ mode. But on the plan which Christ instituted, they were all baptized and added to the church the same day; and, as far as can be learned from the history, all this took place on the spot where they were converted. See Acts ii. 41. In this instance no mention is made of going

down to or coming up from any pool or river.—But I have said that the baptism instituted by Christ is practicable in all *cases* and in all *circumstances*:—at least the apostles found it so, without any difficulty, delay, or danger to the parties concerned. I am indebted to the luminous essay lately published by my highly esteemed tutor, Mr EWING, for a good many of the ideas which appear in this and the preceding article. With his characteristic candour, however, he has made a concession to the baptists which, without some qualifications, seems to me scarcely admissible. “Surely that would be a very extraordinary constitution which could not, at any age, ‘well endure’ to be plunged once in one’s life.” No doubt, in such a place as Glasgow, where the whole process of dressing and plunging, and dressing again, is performed in a warm room, if a proper time be chosen, there are few constitutions but might “well endure” to be plunged in a bath duly tempered; but it must be remembered, that it is only in cases where the whole process took place in the wilderness, or desert, that any mention is made of going down to or coming up from the water; and that in these cases we read of no preparation, no delay, no difficulty. I must again apply for illustration to the country in which I sojourn. The climate on the banks of the Spey is far from being the most intemperate; but there are times in which, if a baptizer should lead out any of his hearers, and plunge them into the Spey, before it would be possible for him or his disciple to get to the nearest shifting place, their drenched clothes would be completely frozen about them; and I suspect there are not many constitutions that would “well endure” to bear this. — At any rate, I may appeal to any honest physician if such a process would not more than endanger the constitution of most of the female sex,—in certain circumstances. I am aware that to escape such danger, the baptists wait for a more convenient season. To me this seems a pretty strong presumptive proof, that a plan which renders such procrastination necessary is not the institution of Christ. To the above I must add, that the scheme of immersion seems hardly consist-

ent with true modesty and decency. It has been with some difficulty that I have got my mind to yield to the mentioning of this. But I feel persuaded that it merits the attention of my readers in general, and particularly of my female readers. It is well known that females are found the most pliable subjects for the baptist scheme. I do not wonder at this:—but I have often wondered what becomes of their female feelings, and their characteristic modesty, when they consent to be immersed after the manner of the baptists? I would entreat them to think more seriously and deliberately on the subject, and then to judge within themselves, if it be consistent with that “shame-facedness and sobriety which becometh women who profess godliness,” to be treated by any male operator, and he a stranger too, in the way in which the immerser *must* treat every female who submits to be plunged on the baptist plan. I would beseech male and female to judge within themselves, if such a mode of observing a divine ordinance can have been appointed by Him who hath said, “Let all things be done decently and in order.”

Should we allow the possibility of the absence of every feeling from the mind of the *agent* and the *object acted upon*, but that of piety and devotion, what shall be said of the feelings of the spectators? Will any one say, that there is nothing in the baptist scheme of plunging females necessarily calculated to excite improper feelings in their minds? If the scene has a natural and a necessary tendency to produce such feelings, can the holy Saviour be the author of the plan? Let the reader endeavour to put his thumb, for the time, on his system; let him lay aside every pretence of religion in the case, and then say, whether or not it can be pronounced decent in any man to lay hold of a modest woman, and plunge her under the water, lift her up again, and lead her out, to be a gazing-stock to numerous spectators, of every variety of character, of sex, and of age?

I know that my baptist friends, especially females among them, will be ready to vindicate their conduct by a reference to the manner of the purification of the

Jews," which undoubtedly was of Divine institution. But from this the baptist scheme derives no countenance when duly examined by the Scriptures. What has blinded females in this matter is, that in their minds they connect the ceremonial bathings with the duties of the priests. "Did not the priests under the law treat females in the manner in which our teachers have baptized us?" "And will you call that immodest or indecent which God hath commanded his people to observe and do?" No, far be it from me to impute any such thing to the Almighty; but I have sufficient evidence in his word, that he has given no such command under the law or under the gospel; and you may have the same evidence too, if you will only be persuaded to lay aside your system, and take the Bible for your guide. If you bring me one single text from the Bible that bears directly, or by just inference, that any of all the priests, prophets, apostles, or teachers, which God ordained, ever plunged an individual, male or female, after the manner of the baptists, I will yield the question at issue. But instead of this, if my reader will carefully examine the writings of Moses, of the prophets, apostles, and evangelists, on the subject, he will find that the baptists' mode is at variance with "the manner of the purifying of the Jews" in the three following particulars:—1st, The symbolical baptisms of the Jews, for consecrating persons or things to the service of God, were undoubtedly performed by pouring or sprinkling upon. Compare Hebrews ix. with all the various baptisms to which the writer refers. 2d, Those various ceremonial ablutions, some of which were of daily recurrence, "after the manner of the purifying of the Jews," were performed not by the priests or their Nethinims, nor by any other operator, but by the subject himself. In other words, there was no such thing as the baptizers and the baptized. 3d, "The manner of the purifying of the Jews" was, that the person whose case required ceremonial purifying should both *bathe his flesh* and *wash his clothes*. In other words, the Jewish manner was to bathe *the naked body*, and to wash the *polluted garments*, separate from the

body. I candidly own, that when superstition adopted the baptists' plan of plunging, it at the same time retained one part of the manner of the Jewish purifying, viz. the subjects were plunged, whether male or female, completely *naked*. This is well known to the learned advocates of the plunging scheme, though they do not find it convenient, in the present age, to plead for what they know to have been the undoubted practice from the commencement of immersion-baptism. The following is the explicit testimony of one of the ablest baptist writers on the subject:—"Let it be observed, that the primitive Christians baptized naked. Nothing is easier than to give proof of this by quotations from the authentic writings of men who administered baptism, who certainly knew in what manner they performed it. There is no ancient historical fact better authenticated than this. The evidence doth not go on the meaning of the single word naked; for then a reader might suspect allegory; but on many facts reported, and many reasons assigned for the practice. One of these facts is this: Chrysostom criminales Theophilus, "because he had raised a disturbance without, which so frightened the women in the baptistry, who had just stripped themselves naked, in order to be baptized, that they fled naked out of the room, without having time to consult the modesty of their sex." There is no reason to wonder that, in their flight, the women referred to did not consult the modesty of their sex, when it is remembered that superstition had made them sacrifice it so completely before, by stripping themselves naked in order to be plunged under the water, and raised up from under the water by the hand of some male administrator. Nor is this all; if it be true, as the above author maintains, that THE PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANS BAPTIZED NAKED, all my female baptist readers are bound to make the self-same sacrifice of THEIR MODESTY; because, in this case, no regard to modesty can justify a departure from primitive example; not to say, that plunging with the clothes on is not washing the body, in any sense of the word, with pure water.

I conclude this article by requesting my baptist friends once more to search and see if they can find, among all the diverse baptisms and purifyings which God ordained under the law, any thing like their plunging scheme. By them God's ancient church is uniformly pronounced *carnal*; but it will be found that, among all her institutes, nothing will be found to equal in *carnality*, properly so called, that one thing on account of which they value themselves so highly above all the rest of their Christian brethren.

Having thus disposed of somewhat more than one half of the baptists' argument for the mode, it may be proper to glance at those passages from which they extort the other half.

We are told that the multitudes who resorted to John's ministry were baptized of him in Jordan, Matt. iii. 5, 6. From the expression, "baptized in Jordan," the baptists infer that John certainly plunged them under and raised them up out of the Jordan. Upon the supposition that the baptizers and the baptized actually went into the stream, I ask the reader, does this necessarily imply that John plunged them under the flood? Might he not after all have baptized them according to the divinely-instituted mode by *pouring* or *sprinkling* the water upon them? But those who understand Greek need not be told that the words upon which the argument is built do not by any means imply that either the baptizers or the baptized dipped the soles of their feet in the Jordan. The baptist argument for dipping rests on the preposition *en*, (in). But they well know, and must acknowledge, that, both in the New Testament, and in the best Greek authors, the same word is frequently and necessarily rendered *at* and *with*. Let any of these acknowledged translations be substituted, and the argument for immersion evaporates. All that can be learned from the text is, that John baptized his disciples *at*, or *with*, the waters of Jordan. We know, however, that John's baptism

was the significant emblem of the baptism with which Christ baptizes his disciples, and we have had ample evidence that this is done, not by *plunging into*, but by *pouring down* the Holy Spirit on the happy subjects. Let the reader compare Matt. iii. 11. with Acts xi. 16.

Again, we read that Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway *out* of the water, Mat. iii, 16. The baptist argument for plunging is grounded on the expression, *went up out of the water*. From these words they infer that John must have plunged the Saviour under the water.* Upon the supposition that Jesus was actually in the water, I have no disposition to deny that he went up out of the water; but the original text does not necessarily imply that he dipped his feet in the stream. It is well known that the Greek word *απο*, (apo) means *from*, and is so translated times without number. For example, “*From* the wrath to come.” Mat. iii. 7. “*From* the wise and prudent.” Matt. xi. 25. “*From* the door.” Mat. xxviii. 2. These examples are all taken from the same inspired writer, and one of them is found in that very chapter in which the Saviour’s baptism is recorded. Let the passage then be translated in the same way, and it simply says, that when Jesus was baptized *at* the Jordan, he went up straightway *from* the river. In the same verse, however, we are informed, that he received, in a visible form, the thing signified by baptism. The Holy Spirit descended upon him. Thus he was baptized both with water and with the Holy Spirit; and we have no more ground to conclude, from the text, that he was immersed into water, than we have that he was immersed into the Divine Spirit. But we are further informed, that Philip and the eunuch went both down into the water, and that they two came both up. Acts viii. 38, 39. The baptists will have it that the eunuch was certainly plunged under the water.

* The baptists’ conduct is at variance with their own exposition of this text. When they plunge their disciples under the water, they kindly *lift them up* again, and lead them out; but it seems John left the Saviour to *go up out of the water* himself.

It has been justly remarked, that if going down into and coming up out of the water necessarily imply immersion, the text assures us that Philip too was under the water; for it tells us that he just did in this respect as his disciple did. The act of going down into the water, and that of coming up out of the water, was done alike by both parties. The plain matter of fact is, that having gone both down to the water for the purpose, Philip baptized the eunuch, in the divinely-instituted and well-known form; and having done so, they came both up again.

Although the prepositions used by Luke be not the same which Matthew uses in recording the baptism of Christ, they are of the same general import. The text means neither more nor less, than that Philip and the eunuch went down *into*, or, as the word is elsewhere translated, *toward* (see Acts, xxviii. 14. toward Rome) the waters, and came up again. Here again I shall take the liberty of adverting to my favourite stream for illustration. Living, as I do, on the banks of the Spey, I sometimes go down with my friend to the river for various purposes; when the purpose for which we went both down is accomplished, we come both up again. Although neither of us put a foot in the waters, if a Grecian were to record the incident in the Greek language, he might very likely use the very same phraseology which the evangelist uses in recording the baptism of the eunuch; and a baptist critic, into whose hand the record might fall, would very naturally infer that I had certainly plunged my friend under the rolling stream.

Once more,—We read that John “was baptizing in Ænon, near to Salim, because there was much water there.” The baptists lay *much stress* on the term *much water*. The learned reader need not be told, that by much water cannot be meant a great river, since no such river was ever found there; and he knows likewise, that the Greek word translated *much* is literally *many*. John was baptizing in a desert place; but it was a place in which it seems there were many waters. Of what kind the text does not inform us; but, as the name

of the place signifies fountain, the probability is, that *Enon* was a place of many fountains or brooks. Upon the supposition that John actually baptized by immersion, no good reason can be assigned for his having selected a place where there were much or even many waters; a very small smooth stream would have answered the purpose much better. But we know a very good reason for his having selected a place in which there were many fountains or brooks; namely, because there were very many attending his ministry, who needed water for more purposes than one. The reader need hardly be told, that in the land of Judea waters would have been indispensably necessary for the multitudes who attended John's ministry, although there had been no baptism included in his work. Hence common prudence would direct him to select a place in which himself and his hearers could be abundantly supplied with that precious element, which, on account of its utility and its necessity, is made the emblem of that Spirit and those spiritual blessings of which baptism with water is the significant sign. Without such supply, the soul of the preacher, and the souls of his numerous hearers, must soon have fainted within them. See Ps. cvii. 5.

Having in the preceding pages attempted an impartial examination of what I conceive to be the principal question at issue between the baptists and pedobaptists, I shall conclude my remarks with a few hints to each of the parties concerned. I begin,—

I. *With those who believe the doctrine and observe the ordinance of infant baptism.* Beloved brethren, persuaded, as I am, that infant baptism is both a duty and a privilege, I cannot but rejoice that you have been enabled to hold it fast. At the same time there is reason to fear that some of you are not sufficiently established in the present truth. Those of you who have examined the subject in its various branches and bearings, with prayer and patient investigation, see with your own eyes the sure foundation on which your

faith rests. It is not likely that you will meet with much trouble in future from your officious neighbours ; but I fear others of you are but very imperfectly instructed in regard to the important subject. This may arise from various causes ; but whatever be the cause, your ignorance exposes you to danger. Probably some of you may have been prevented from paying that attention to the subject which it demands, from an idea that it is barren and unprofitable. This was once the opinion of him who addresses you ; but an examination of the Bible has now convinced him of his mistake. True, indeed, it is both barren and pernicious to be wrangling with men about this or any other external rite ; but it is both pleasant and profitable to trace the everlasting covenant in its various bearings on the subject, as it is gradually and luminously unfolded in the oracles of God. The writer trusts he has found it so ; and therefore he can confidently recommend it to his Christian friends. He would especially beseech Christian parents to take their Bibles, and trace in them the history of redemption. Let them begin with the first intimation of mercy to guilty men, and proceed from Adam to Noah, from Noah to Abraham, from Abraham to Moses, and from Moses to Christ. They will find that, under all the various dispensations of the same immutable covenant of mercy, the Lord has included the infant seed of his people with themselves in its administration. And for their solemn admonition, they will see what dreadful and lasting miseries those parents have entailed on their future posterity, who have broken God's covenant. They will see that the apostacy of Ham, of Ishmael, and of Esau, and those who imitated these ancient apostates in the apostolic age, have been the means of entailing on their descendants the miseries under which they are still groaning. Let them trace Jehovah's great and immutable promise to Abraham and his seed after him, in its gradual development, as it stands connected with every future discovery of his mercy to men, that they may see, for their comfort and edification, those exhaustless and everlasting treasures of mercy which are laid open in Christ

for them and for their children. Let them mark the conduct of God toward the seed of his people in all ages, the many promises given them, and the attention which Christ paid to the little ones. All these things enter deeply into the merits of the present discussion; and by examining them as they are stated in the Bible, they will find that the baptism of their infants is no unmeaning service; they will find that it recognises principles, privileges, and duties, which are likely to affect their posterity for ages to come.

Besides, brethren, your own peace, and that of the church with which you are connected, render it necessary for you to study and understand the subject. The restless opposers of infant baptism soon cease to trouble those whom they find established in the truth. The writer knows this by long experience; and he never knew a single instance of a person's becoming baptist who understood the Scripture doctrine of infant baptism. He trusts the preceding pages will be found helpful to those who wish to study the Bible on the subject. It has been his constant aim to lead the reader to the Scriptures; and unless this end is attained, he will consider his labours to have been in vain.

Permit me to remind you further, brethren, that the subject is a practical one. Endeavour by grace to improve the ordinance of baptism for the purposes for which it was instituted in the church of Christ. Let parents manifest their faith by their works. You, my friends, have embraced God's covenant, unmutilated, for yourselves and your seed; but you do not on that account expect that either you, or any of your's, can inherit the blessings promised in a state of ignorance or unbelief. Need I remind you, that the people whom God brought out of Egypt, who were all baptized, who did all eat the same spiritual meat, &c. with the exception of a believing remnant, perished through unbelief? This is recorded for our admonition. Let it excite you to hide the word of God in your hearts as the rule of your faith and practice; and that you may teach it diligently to your children as they are able to bear. If your children are not taught, like Timothy, to know

the Holy Scriptures from their youth, you are bound to plead guilty both before God and men.

Let the exceeding great and precious promises of the everlasting covenant be early and diligently set before your children, in all their fulness and freeness. Let the law of God, in all its spiritual and extensive requirements, be pressed home upon their consciences. Let them be early taught their accountableness to God, their ruin by sin, and the way of salvation by Jesus Christ. Their baptism recognises those important articles of the Christian faith, and may very properly be occasionally referred to, to enforce the truth on their consciences. Remind them of their privileges, their duties, and their dangers. Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and to every other means, add fervent prayer to God for his effectual blessing. On the other hand, I would earnestly beseech children who have been devoted to God by baptism, to think seriously on the Lord's kindness to them, the peculiar obligations under which they are laid, the encouragement they have to embrace the God of Abraham for their God, and the fearful consequences of forsaking him. My dear young friends, your baptism implies very precious privileges; but it will profit you nothing unless you obey the gospel to which it bears witness. Nay, if you are found neglecting the great salvation to which it refers, your baptism, like all your other privileges, must greatly aggravate your future misery. Ishmael and Esau, as well as Isaac and Jacob, received the token of God's covenant; but you know they rejected the covenant of the Lord, and were of course cast out of his family. Ponder the history of Ishmael, of Esau, of Isaac, and of Jacob, and the history of their respective posterity. In their history you may see some of the consequences both of embracing and of rejecting the mercy promised; the consequences of improving and of abusing the precious privileges which God has connected with your birth and your baptism. Be assured that God is no respecter of persons. "If you seek him, he will be found of you; but if you forsake him, he will cast you off for evermore."

How solemn the consideration ! may the Spirit impress it deeply upon your hearts !

It now remains to drop a few hints,—

II. To those who may have rejected infant baptism.

My respected friends, allow me to say, that I feel grieved for the part you have acted. I do so, because the Bible convinces me that, by renouncing infant baptism, you have observed lying vanities, and forsaken your own mercies. This I have endeavoured to prove in the preceding pages. In doing so, however, I doubt not you have acted conscientiously ; but you know there is such a thing as an erroneous conscience. Hence the necessity of trying its verdict by the word of God. That in this matter your conscience has been misled has, I trust, been already manifested, not by the obscurity of the Bible, but by the sophistry of eminent disputants. Some of you will no doubt think I have written against you ; and, on this account, you will be apt to hold me as your enemy ; but I deny the charge. I have not written, to my knowledge, a single sentence against any of you, though I have used great plainness in pointing out the truth of God in contrast with the errors which you have ignorantly embraced. If, on this account, you hold me as an enemy, I shall be very sorry for it ; but, in the mean time, I entreat you, for the truth's sake, to listen to the following exhortation :—Be entreated,—

1st, *To admit the possibility of your living in an error on the subject of infant baptism.* This you know is a fact, whether you will admit it or not, and the admission of it can do you no harm. My request is, therefore, a reasonable one ; and yet I fear few of your number can be brought to comply with it. Until this admission is made, it is impossible to examine or judge impartially. This, I know by experience, is one chief reason why so few of your number come to the knowledge of the truth on the subject of baptism. They come to the Bible, persuaded that they cannot be wrong ; not to examine the subject impartially. Hence the Bible is compelled to speak in favour of the system ;

and those parts of it which cannot be made to yield must be discarded from the subject. This is a weakness—shall I say wickedness, which is by no means peculiar to the opposers of infant baptism; the writer feels himself as liable to its pernicious influence as any man on earth; but he has made it his study to guard against it in the present discussion, and the request he has now made is, that his readers may do so likewise. Admitting, therefore, the possibility of your living in error, be entreated,—

2d, *To reflect on the consequences of being such.* I am aware that, holding your present views, you apprehend no danger; but that will not prevent the evil, although it may sooth your minds. If it be true, and nothing is more clearly revealed in the Bible, that God has from the beginning included the infant seed of his people with the parents in his everlasting covenant, and allowed them a place in his visible family on earth, must it not be a serious matter for you, without a shade of authority from him, to cut them all off, which, to the utmost of your power, you do? One thing is certain, and it merits your serious consideration, viz. that, in case you be in an error, you will be found as criminal, and as cruel too, as a Jew would have been in rejecting the ordinance of infant circumcision. I would again beseech you to think seriously on the aspect your system and conduct have toward your offspring in the event of their dying in infancy. I am aware that you feel persuaded that your conduct cannot affect your children. You believe, that if they die in infancy, they shall certainly be saved. Be it so. But I wish you to give me a reason for this hope that is in you. You have, by word and deed, explicitly renounced that part of the covenant which embraces the seed of believers. Pray, then, shew me your warrant in the Bible for indulging such sweet hope concerning them living or dying. Either your children are or they are not interested in the covenant of grace. You believe they are not, and that they have no interest in any one of its promises. If this be really the case, they certainly can have no interest in the mercy contained in the covenant,

and exhibited in the promises to feed our faith and hope; and if they have no interest in the mercy of the covenant, what scriptural ground of hope have you in their behalf?

To escape the horror of this dilemma, your teachers maintain, and you believe, that all the posterity of Adam who die in infancy are “equally and certainly saved;” and they exclaim against what they call “the partial, gloomy, and awful aspect” of the doctrine of infant baptism, as if it were inconsistent with the belief that dying infants of every name may be saved. Just so the Arminians exclaim against the “the partial, the gloomy,” and the awful aspect of the doctrine of election, &c. And for the very same purpose, viz. to prejudice their respective hearers against the truth in question, and to divert their attention from the force of evidence. But remember, my friends, exclamation is not argument; since you have rejected every promise in the Bible, in reference to your infants, tell me upon what it is that you rest your sure and certain hope of their salvation?

That God has included the infant seed of his people in his everlasting covenant is a revealed truth, which warrants believers to hope that those of their children who die in infancy are saved by the mercy of that covenant. Whether or not all who die in infancy are certainly and alike saved,” (notwithstanding of the confident assertions of our friends), is a question which the Bible does not answer, and which, in my opinion, ought never to have been stated or answered by vain man. For aught I see in the Bible to the contrary, they may be saved; but this is one of those secret things which belong to God, and therefore it belongs not to me to affirm or deny. Under these solemn considerations, be entreated,—

3d, *To have recourse to your Bible and the throne of grace.* You have listened too long to the confident assertions of erring mortals like yourselves. Abandon these, and listen to him who has promised to “guide the meek in judgment.” Begin the process of investigation where the Author of truth began his revelation of mer-

cy to guilty men. Mark the connexion which God hath established between parents and children, and the regard he has shewn to that connexion, both in the exercise of his mercy to them that fear him, and in the execution of his righteous judgments on his enemies. You will find, that upon the seed of the righteous he has pronounced his blessing; and that upon the seed of the wicked he has pronounced his righteous curse. You will find that his revealed character throughout the Bible is “a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children of them which hate him; and, shewing mercies to thousands of them that love him,” &c. See Ex. xx. 5, 6, and xxiv. 6, 7.

As is his name, so is his covenant. Both are alike immutable and eternal. You may esteem this “partial,” “gloomy,” and “fearful,” but such is the fact. Hence the distinction which God has made between the children of his servants and the rest of mankind has continued, and must continue, under every dispensation of his mercy, until the last trumpet shall have announced the end of time.

You admit that the infants were included with their parents in the administration of God’s holy covenant until Christ came; that they enjoyed its seal, and a place in his visible family. Banish system from your mind, and reflect on this acknowledged fact. Can you conceive any thing more improbable, than that the merciful Saviour, the author of that covenant which he had commanded for ever, should retract his grant, and cut off the infants under the most enlarged, the most perfect administration of the covenant. You believe he has done the deed. But where is your authority? It is not in the Bible. Search and you will see. Your intelligent leaders, who have studied our arguments, well know that, if the Old Testament be admitted in evidence, their cause is lost. Hence they persuade you to shut that part of the revelation of mercy on the subject of baptism, and you have yielded to their counsel. But is this wisely done? Did Jesus or his apostles give any such counsel to their hearers? Did they shut out the Old Testament when treating of that covenant

from which all our blessings flow? With an exclusive reference to the Old Testament Jesus says, "Search the Scriptures." The apostle says, "Whatsoever things are written aforetime were written for our learning." "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness," &c. But it seems your system will admit of no instruction from these Scriptures on the question at issue. This proves that it is not of God. But,

4th, *Connect with the above the absurd views which your system compels your ablest advocates to give of the Old Testament dispensation.* A pretty fair specimen of what I here refer to will be found in the preceding pages. Be entreated to attend to the following contrast between the testimony of Jehovah and that of your leaders:—

God assures us that he has established his covenant, to be a God to Abraham, and to his seed after him, for a thousand generations, yea, for ever,—for an everlasting covenant.—Your leaders maintain, that it terminated with the forty-second generation. Jesus assures us that its great promise includes the glorious resurrection and the glorious future inheritance.—Your leaders teach, that to Abraham's seed it only implied temporal blessings, and that, whatever might be their character or their conduct, nothing could deprive them of these. From the Bible we learn, that circumcision signified spiritual things exclusively.—Your leaders apply it to carnal things. The apostle assures us that circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of the faith.—Your leaders teach, that to Abraham's posterity it was a sign of carnal descent, a mark of national distinction, &c.; and that to the servants it was a mark of bondage and slavery. The apostle tells us that circumcision profited much every way; but chiefly because to the circumcised were committed the oracles of God.—Your leaders teach, that it profited little, unless to secure to the posterity of Abraham a temporal inheritance, which no impropriety of conduct or character could forfeit. God assures us that he had planted his

ancient church wholly a right seed.—Your leaders teach, that it was wholly a carnal seed. God assures us that the wicked or immoral Jews had no right to take his covenant in their mouth.—Your leaders maintain, that, however wicked, they were in covenant with God, and that nothing could deprive them of the blessings of the Abrahamic family. God forbade the wicked Jews to bring their sacrifices, and assured them, that they were an abomination.—Your leaders affirm, that they had a right to bring them notwithstanding of their wickedness. The apostle assures us that Christ came to confirm the promises made to the fathers.—Your teachers maintain, that, when Christ came, he abrogated all the promises which belong to the children of his servants. God assures us that the seed of the righteous is blessed.—Your leaders maintain, that they are under the curse. God assures us that the children of believers are, as formerly, federally holy.—Your leaders maintain, that they are unclean. God assures us that under Messiah's reign the children of his people shall be as aforetime.—Your leaders teach, that Messiah has taken from them all their former privileges. God assures us that the promise is still to us and to our children.—Your leaders maintain, that there is not one promise in the Bible to our children. God tells us that those that are strangers to the covenants of promise are without Christ and without hope.—Your leaders maintain, that a multitude of those who are such shall certainly be saved. Christ assures us that infants form a constituent part of his kingdom.—Your leaders teach, that they have no more right to a place there than the beasts that perish. Christ hath commanded us to receive the little ones in his name, because they belong to him.—Your leaders have cast them all out of their churches, and forbid Christ's people to receive them. In the churches which were planted by the apostles, we find the children to be brought up with their parents. Your leaders maintain, that they have no more right to be recognised as a part of the family than madmen. The Lord tells us, that the mode of baptism which he instituted in his church, for symbolical separation to his

service, consists in the application of the elements of baptism by *pouring* or *sprinkling*.—Your leaders affirm, that nothing less than plunging under the element is Christ's ordinance in name or thing.

The contrast might be extended to every article in question between us and our friends. The proof of most of the articles enumerated will be found in the former pages, and the specimen given may suffice. I request my baptist friends to give it a serious consideration. Those of them who are acquainted with what their advocates have said and published on the subject will see that no injustice is done to their avowed statements. But I know some of you, my friends, will be at a loss to conceive what could have induced men of eminent piety and talent to give such a view of the articles enumerated,—some of which you see are in opposition to what you read in the Scriptures. This is owing to your ignorance of the system you have embraced, and of the real questions at issue between you and us. Your leaders understand the subject much better; and they have given the above views of these important things, because they felt that their cause required it.

To conclude:—With your Bible for your guide, be entreated to review your objections to the baptism of your infants, and do not dismiss the subject till you shall have examined it thoroughly. I am certain that very many of you have never taken the time nor used the means of coming to a proper decision. Your attention has never been turned to the chain of evidence contained in the Bible in behalf of the continuation of God's gracious grant to the infant seed of his people. At the outset you were industriously led in an opposite direction. For this you are not so much to blame as those who misled you, no doubt thinking they were doing God service. But if you trifle with the subject, now that your attention has been called to it, or if you violate the convictions you may have received respecting any part of the controversy, you must henceforth bear the blame. I by no means wish you to give up your objections to infant baptism with the same rashness

that you adopted them. All I request of you is, that you take time and examine them carefully by the Word of God. You will find the most plausible objections stated and answered in the former pages; but make the Bible your only guide, and the prayer of faith your constant resource, when you feel at a loss which view to espouse. Beware of excluding the convictions of truth when they present themselves on any branch of the subject. To this you will have many temptations; but do not you yield to them. "Buy the truth, and sell it not." "Be not wise in your own conceit." "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy steps." And

May the good Shepherd lead the writer and every reader in the paths of righteousness for his own name-sake.

THE END

